

EAST CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 450-1450

# From Pax Mongolica to Pax Ottomanica

*War, Religion and Trade in  
the Northwestern Black Sea Region  
(14th-16th Centuries)*



*Edited by*  
Ovidiu Cristea and Liviu Pilat



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*General Editors*

Florin Curta and Dušan Zupka

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## Acknowledgements

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The participants involved (Bogdan-Petru Maleon, Laurențiu Rădvan, Liviu Pilat and Ovidiu Cristea) intended to draw attention on the Black Sea as a neglected area of the Crusading focusing on some small political actors as the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. We were aware that the suggested topics mirrored only mere details of a broader and more complicate picture, an impression strengthened by the discussions which followed each paper. The present volume is the result of the aforementioned discussions and suggestions. We are immensely grateful to professor Florin Curta for his support in organising the panel as for his encouragement to submit a proposal for the collection *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* despite the fact that, eventually, the volume encompasses a wider chronological frame.

Each book has its own history and the present one makes no exception. From the group which started the project as from the scholars who accepted to contribute, Bogdan-Petru Maleon and professor Șerban Papacostea passed away before the end of the project. This volume is dedicated to their memory.



# Introduction

*Ovidiu Cristea and Liviu Pilat*

The history of the Black Sea may be considered as alternating between an “inner lake,” when a single empire establishes control over the sea and its surrounding areas, and that of an “open sea,” in which various continental or maritime powers compete for the region’s resources. From Antiquity to the present day, this “advanced gulf” of the Mediterranean into continental Europe has been a crossroads of important trade routes. It has also been a stage for power struggles between empires, civilisations and religions, which means a close connection between war, religion and trade. That is primarily why most historians of the Black Sea, from Nikolai Murzakievici,<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Volkov,<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Heyd,<sup>3</sup> Nicolae Iorga,<sup>4</sup> to Gheorghe I. Brătianu,<sup>5</sup> Şerban Papacostea,<sup>6</sup> Halil Inalcik,<sup>7</sup> Sergei Karpov,<sup>8</sup> Geo Pistarino,<sup>9</sup> Michel Balard,<sup>10</sup> Charles King<sup>11</sup> or Evgeny Khvalkov<sup>12</sup> have typically focused on political, strategic and commercial aspects of Pontic history.

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- 1 Italian version Nicolai Murzakievici, “Storia delle colonie genovesi in Crimea,” in *Miscellanea di Storia ligure in memoria di Giorgio Falco* (Genoa: Università di Genova, 1966), 375–435 (the original Russian text was published in 1837).
  - 2 Mihail Volkov, “La Rivalità tra Venezia e Genova nel secolo XIV”, in *Saggi e documenti*, 4, (Genoa: Civico Istituto Colombiano, 1983), pp. 143–181. The original Russian version was published in 1860.
  - 3 Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, vol. 1–2, second edition, (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1886).
  - 4 Nicolae Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chiliei și Cetății Albe* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1899).
  - 5 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1929); Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *La Mer Noire des origines à la conquête ottomane* (Munich: Societatea Academică Română, 1969).
  - 6 Şerban Papacostea, *La Mer Noire: carrefour des grandes routes intercontinentales, 1204–1453*, (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006).
  - 7 Halil Inalcik, “The Question of the Closing of the Black Sea under the Ottomans,” *Arheion Pontou*, 35 (1979), pp. 74–110.
  - 8 Serghei P. Karpov, *L’Impero di Trebisonda, Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204–1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali* (Roma: Il Veltro, 1986); Serghei P. Karpov, *La navigazione veneziana nel Mar Nero, XIII–XV sec.*, (Ravenna: Girasole, 2000).
  - 9 Geo Pistarino, *I Gin dell’Oltremare* (Genoa: Civico Istituto Colombiano, 1988); G. Pistarino, *I signori del mare* (Genoa: Civico Istituto Colombiano, 1992).
  - 10 M. Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>–début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, 1–11, (Rome, 1978).
  - 11 Charles King, *The Black Sea: a history*, (Oxford, 2005).
  - 12 Evgeny Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa in the Black Sea region. Evolution and Transformation* (New York-London: Routledge, 2018).

From a political point of view, the Black Sea's importance grew up after 1204 when the armies of the Fourth Crusade conquered Constantinople and even more after 1354 when the Ottoman Turks established a bridgehead at Gallipoli and began their expansion in Europe. The first event marked the end of the history of Byzantine Black Sea, while the second opened the age of the Ottoman expansion in the region. The treaty of Nymphaion signed in March 1261, between emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and Genoa, several months before the fall of the Latin Empire, had a huge impact on the evolution of the Black Sea in the 13th–14th century.<sup>13</sup> For the first time a Byzantine emperor opened the Black Sea to the foreign traders thus starting the process for the transformation of the Black Sea in a sort of Genoese “inner lake”. Soon after 1261 Genoa replaced their Venetian arch-rivals in Constantinople and created a network of emporia along all the shores of the Black Sea. These settlements were not just trade centers, but also naval bases from which trade routes were controlled. At the end of the 13th century, Genoa already established a strong hegemony in the Pontic area. The network enabled the Genoese to control trade in the entire region and, additionally, to compel merchants from other areas to accept their terms.<sup>14</sup> Foreign merchants were forced to load their merchandises only onto Genoese ships, to trade only in Genoese establishments and to avoid rival ports. The rise of Mongols, which controlled the Northern shores of the Black Sea and a large adjacent area, had a huge impact on the reconfiguration of the international trade routes between Europe and Asia. The term *pax mongolica* indicates the time between 1280 and 1360, when the Mongol domination guaranteed security on trade routes between Asia and Europe. The “symbiosis” between *pax mongolica* and the initiative of Genoese merchants opened the way for the transformation of the Black Sea into “a plaque tournante du commerce international”.<sup>15</sup> Such a combination of factors was in turn made possible by dramatic political changes taking place in East Central

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13 For this topic, see recently Șerban Papacostea, “Byzance et les Détroits sous les premiers Paléologues,” *Il Mar Nero*, 4 (2000), pp. 151–160; Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa*, 62–63.

14 For this aspect see Angeliki E. Laiou, “Monopoly and Privilege: the Byzantine reaction to the Genoese presence in the Black Sea,” in *Oriente e Occidente nel Medioevo ed Età Moderna. Studi in Onore di Geo Pistarino*, ed. Laura Balletto (Genoa: G. Brigati, 1997), pp. 675–686.

15 The phrase belong to Gheorghe I. Brătianu, “La Mer Noire, plaque tournante du traffic international à la fin du Moyen Age,” *Revue Historique du Sud Est Européen*, 21 (1944), pp. 36–69; more recently Șerban Papacostea, *La Mer Noire Carrefour des grandes routes internationales 1204–1453* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006); Virgil Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012); Nicola Di Cosmo, “Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea frontier in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: convergences and conflicts,” in *Turco-Mongol*

Europe, as well as the Eastern Mediterranean in the mid-13th century. Mongol Khans secured the safety of the trade routes across the region, while granting commercial privileges to Genoese merchants who, in turn, brought in a considerable flow of commodities in the Black Sea ports. The trade explosion that followed may explain the rise of such trade centres as Caffa, Pera, Trebizond, Tana, Kilia and Moncastro. The Genoese presence in the region and the prosperity of the Genoese trade centres in the Black Sea area soon attracted attention from other maritime powers of the time. Pisa was in decline during the second half of the 13th century, but Venice remained a main maritime power of the Mediterranean. Between the late 13th and the late 14th century, Venetian interest in the Black Sea trade led to three major confrontations with Genoa for supremacy in the region. Although the wars ended without any conclusive victory on either side, the Genoese managed to maintain a dominant position and even to restrict for short periods the Venetian access to Tana.

In addition to a general reconfiguration of the trade networks in the Black Sea area, the Mongols had a great impact on the crusade projects of the Late Middle Ages. Even so, the Black Sea was never a major front of the war against the “infidels” by contrast with the Holy Land, the Baltic region or the Iberian Peninsula. Moreover, many military actions were initiated by powers from outside the area as the “insiders” seem to have been minor political actors, too weak to launch a major offensive against the enemies of the Cross (as the Latin Empire in the 13th century was).

Nevertheless, the study of the topic is important for the understanding of the crusading movement in the Later Middle Ages as long as many themes and ideas used by Western powers (the Papacy, Venice, the German emperor, France, England) are to be found in Central and Eastern Europe not only in the Catholic kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, but also in orthodox principalities such as Wallachia and Moldavia. It is important to know how such themes were employed, how they were shaped by the aims of the political actors or by conjectural changes and where ended the rhetorical claims and began the concrete action. The answer to all these questions and many others could differ from one case to another, so we are aware that an overview of the crusade in the Black Sea region risks oversimplification of a much complex picture or ignorance of important details. Moreover, there are several methodological problems. For instance, the label “crusade” applied by the sources to many military expeditions directed against those considered as enemies of the faith. For various reasons some contemporary documents pictured a certain military

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*Nomads and Sedentary Societies*, eds. Reuven Amitai—Michal Biran, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 391–424.

expedition as a crusade; it is the case of the chronicle of Henri de Valenciennes who considered the war of the Latin Empire against the Bulgarian kingdom as a fight against the enemies of the Cross or, around mid-14th century, of the example of Genoese and Venetian documents which described the clash with the Golden Horde as a fight against the infidels, for the benefit of Christendom. Should we follow the sources' perspective and consider them as "holy expeditions" or rather as particular wars in search of legitimacy? Even if the second answer is more probable it is important to analyse how the vocabulary of the holy war was used in a certain context, how convincingly such rhetorical strategy was and, no less important, what was hidden behind such strategy?

A discussion about the war in the Black Sea zone should take into account a wider area, as many developments strongly related to events that occurred in other regions of the Mediterranean and East Central Europe. Many "outsiders" of the Black Sea zone (Genoa, Venice, Hungary) developed a Pontic policy<sup>16</sup> or at least manifest some interest to control a certain area or some strategic points. There were no less than three wars between the two Italian Republics for the control of the trade in the region, conflicts which involved Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim powers and which had long-term consequences on the evolution of the Black Sea in the Later Middle Ages.

Despite the difficulty to define the region according to medieval sources, it is a fact that from 1204 onwards the Black Sea as a geographical unity was a zone of expansion for the Latin Europe. The main agents of this expansion were the merchants and the Latin missionaries who for two centuries developed their activity in the area. Several contributions in the first part of the volume discuss this period. Şerban Papacostea and Laurenţiu Rădvan insist on various political and commercial evolutions in the Black Sea area during the 13th and the 14th centuries, Roman Hautala focuses on the activity of Dominican and Franciscan friars in Golden Horde's Empire, while Şerban Marin adopts

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16 For the less known Hungarian Pontic policy see Şerban Papacostea, "Ungaria și Marea Neagră în secolul al XIII-lea," in *Secolul al XIII-lea pe meleagurile locuite de români*, ed. Adrian Andrei Rusu, (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2006), pp. 17–27; Papacostea, "Kilia et la politique orientale de Sigismond de Luxembourg," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 15 (1976) pp. 421–436; Papacostea, "Din nou cu privire la politica orientală a lui Sigismund de Luxemburg (1412)," in *Ştefan Meteş la 85 de ani*, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1977), pp. 243–246; Zsigmond Pal Pach, "La politica commerciale di Luigi d'Angio e il traffico delle mercanzie maritime dopo la pace di Zara," in *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975), pp. 105–119; Pach, "Le commerce du Levant et la Hongrie au Moyen Age," *Annales E.S.C.* 31 (1976), pp. 1176–1194; Ovidiu Cristea, "Venice the Balkan policy of Hungary and the rise of the Ottoman empire," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes*, 40 (2002), pp. 179–194.

another perspective, focusing on how the Venetian historiography reflected a specific event—the fall of Tana in 1343.

The first chapter *The Genoese in the Black Sea (1261–1453). Metamorphoses of a Hegemony* is a tribute to the memory of professor Șerban Papacostea, a scholar who dedicated many years analysing the Genoese presence in “Mar Maggiore”. The paper emphasizes how from the treaty of Nymphaion onward, the Ligurian merchants developed a network of fortified emporia which was the first step for their hegemony in the Pontic region. Mixing diplomacy and war, the Genoese ensured, in time, the renewal and enlargement of privileges granted by regional powers (Byzantium, the Golden Horde, the Empire of Trebizond, the Despotate of Dobroudja), the control of key points (Pera, Caffa, Trebizond, Kilia) and the limitations of the presence of their Venetian arch-rivals. Obviously, the Genoese system did not lack in moments of malfunction or crisis; the conflict between the metropolis and its colonies, the clash with local powers or the wars for supremacy with Venice were serious challenges to the Genoese domination in the Black Sea. However, until the Ottoman conquest, the system maintained its key features, which mirrored the flexibility of Genoese policy and their ability to adapt to difficult circumstances.

Among the Genoese emporia in the Black Sea, Kilia/Licostomo and Akkerman/Moncastro played an important role not only in the international trade, but also in the emergence of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as in the commercial rivalry between Hungary and Poland in the 14th and 15th centuries.

In the chapter *Between Byzantium, the Mongol Empire, Genoa and Moldavia: Trade Centers in the North-Western Black Sea Area*, Laurențiu Rădvan approaches the economic policies linked to two important port-cities pointing out how these centers emerged and developed, in a region opened to Byzantine, Mongol, but also Italian influences. The Byzantine impact still remains an overlooked topic, on account of the fact that these commercial centers reached their peak in a period during which Byzantium’s role in the north-western Black Sea area diminished. Conversely, a prominent political position in the region was taken after 1241 by the Mongols. Lacking the experience necessary for administering a profitable trade environment, they allowed the Genoese to settle these shores after the treaty of Nymphaion. The first mention of the Genoese at the mouth of the Dniester is in 1290, but they were probably present from earlier times, persuaded by the fact that the “Mongol road” ended here. The Italian merchants actively focused on trading grain, wax, honey, skins, and slaves from the region, an activity that allowed them to exert an increasing influence on the economy, but also in terms of community organization, administration, etc. The decline of the Golden Horde towards the mid-14th century did not affect the trade in

the area, but the Genoese were forced to deal with the emergence of new political actors such as Wallachia and Moldavia. As a result, due to the insecurity provoked by the internal struggle for power in the Golden Horde, the so-called “Tatar road” which connected the Black Sea shores with Southern Poland was abandoned in favour of the “Moldavian road” which linked Moncastro and Licostomo with Lviv. This connection ensured the further economic growth of Moncastro and Licostomo but, in time, the Moldavian Princes progressively restricted the privileges of the Genoese merchants in their realm.

In parallel with the commercial expansion, from the mid thirteenth century onwards the area acknowledged an increasing Latin missionary activity analysed by Roman Hautala in the chapter concerning *Catholic Missions in the Golden Horde Territory*. The apostolate among the Mongol and Turkic nomads of Eastern Europe was an important aspect of the Western Christianity’s offensive in the Black Sea area whose aim was to convert the Mongol elite to the Christian faith as a response to the increasing influence of Islam among the Mongols. The chapter insists, especially, on the Franciscan and Dominican missionary activity during the reign of Khan Uzbek. Due to the powers granted to them by the Holy See, the friars deployed strenuous efforts to contain the increasing Muslim proselytism in the territories subjected to the Golden Horde. From this perspective, the Latin sources concerning the Tatars’ conversion to Islam and the Muslim proselytism among the Khan’s subjects are very important as they cast new insights on the topic. Moreover, the Latin documents point to details usually ignored by Russian or Muslim sources and thus enable a more subtle debate on the Khan Uzbek’s reasons to accept Islam as official religion. However, Uzbek’s conversion did not put a stop to the Catholic missionary activity. His intention to preserve the Northern Black Sea shores as an attractive zone for the Western merchants explained why he extended his protection also over the Catholic missionaries. Thus, it may be understood, why Uzbek’s reign, which corresponds with the official adoption of Islam, was also the period with the greatest successes for the missionaries. Their actions targeted not only the nomads but also the Orthodox or Armenian subjects from the Golden Horde’s territories, an activity, which ended only with the conquest of Caffa and Crimea by the Ottomans in 1475.

The Khan’s benevolence towards the Western “agents” was not lacking tense episodes. The assault on Tana in 1343 and the subsequent siege of Caffa by Uzbek successor, Djanibeg, threatened to undermine the Western trade supremacy in the Black Sea, and especially on the Northern shores. The episode was spectacular and its details are well known.<sup>17</sup> This is why Şerban

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17 R. Morozzo della Rocca, “Notizie da Caffa,” in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, III, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1962), pp. 266–295; Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea*, pp. 200–219.



Marin's contribution "*La rotta della Tana*" (1343). *The Viewpoint of the Venetian Chronicles*, analyses less the event and more its remembrance in the Venetian narrative sources. The documentary base is impressive: no less than 196 manuscripts and 20 published chronicles, which mention the episode as a major event for the Venetian history. Along with the quantitative challenge, the author had to overpass several methodological issues. In many cases, there are no certainties about the chronicler, the moment when he accomplished his work, his sources or his motivations. Moreover, many pages were borrowed from previous narrative sources and it is difficult to determine if the chronicler simply cut and paste the fragments of interest or if he reshaped them according to his own views. Despite these difficulties, the analysis proposed by Şerban Marin shows how the Venetian perceived the incident of Tana and how the Venetian historiography remembered this episode in short and in long term. Although in military terms the fall of Tana was a minor setback, for the chroniclers it was a major event as the destruction of the emporium was a huge blow for the Venetian commercial interests.

Fifty years later, Tana suffered another serious blow during the clash between the Golden Horde and Timur Lenk. Nagy Pienaru discusses in his chapter *The Timurids and the Black Sea*, the consequences of the emergence of a new dynamic factor of power in the area after the Timur Lenk's conquest of Azerbaijan. Timur's intention to revive the Persian Ilkhanate opened the way for the confrontation in the Black Sea area with other major political actors: the Golden Horde and the Ottoman Empire. The competition for political supremacy was doubled by different commercial aims of the rivals. Despite the shock provoked in the Pontic region, the Timurid invasion did not alter significantly its commercial importance as the main trade centres and commercial routes resumed soon their activities. Moreover, after defeating both the Golden Horde and the Ottoman Empire, Timur Lenk tried to forge a vast commercial programme aimed to connect his capital, Samarkand, with the trade routes passing through the Black Sea, Central Asia, Persia and Azerbaijan. As his Ilkhanid predecessors or his rivals of the Golden Horde, he tried to ensure the necessary commodities for his territories by granting privileges to the main commercial agents of the time, the Genoese and the Venetians. These contacts went hand in hand with an anti-Ottoman alliance between Timur and the Christian princes, an illusion based on Timur Lenk's allegedly favour towards Christians and on the previous attempts of collaboration between the Western powers and the Ilkhanate of Persia. Although the aforementioned alliance was never accomplished, the quest for an Oriental ally against the Ottomans still persisted. It revived in the second half of the 15th century by the *Ak Koyunlu* leader, Uzun Hassan and, later on, at the beginning of the 16th century by the emergence of Safavid Persia.

From the imperial policy of the Golden Horde and Timur Lenk the next chapter passes on two other “small” actors of the Black Sea area: *The Principality of Theodoro (Mangup) and Stephen the Great’s Moldavia. Observations and Hypothesis*.

Starting from an extremely dispersed documentation, Ștefan S. Gorovei, emphasises the importance of the Black Sea in Moldavia’s policy during the reign of Stephen the Great (1457–1504). A well-known fact, the dynastic alliance between the prince and a princess of Mangup, Maria Asanina Palaeologina, is now placed in a wider perspective. The marriage strengthened the Prince’s claim over the control of the north-western shores of the Black Sea, from the Danube’s mouth to Crimea. Moreover, the relations with the Principality of Theodoro implicitly assumed the protection of two ancient and prestigious metropolitans of Gothia and Crimea. However, such ambitions clashed with Mehemed II’s policy in the region especially after the outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and the principality of Moldavia in 1473. Despite Stephen the Great’s victory over Ottoman army in January 1475, the conquest of Theodoro by the Ottomans several months later put an end to Stephen’s projects. From 1475 onwards, Moldavia was placed in a vulnerable position between the Ottoman Empire and the Khanate of Crimea, which in the same year became a satellite of the Porte. However, Stephen did not seem to abandon his Crimean projects. Two years later, in 1477, a Moldavian ambassador in Venice was instructed to discuss the project of the recovery of Crimea for the Christians.

The idea, although not realistic, may also be found in other documents from the end of the 15th century. In the chapter *Attempts to Form a Genoese-Polish-Tartar Coalition against the Ottoman Empire in 1480–1484*, Danuta Quirini-Poplawska adds more details regarding the Genoese efforts to recover the former colonies from Crimea. Some inhabitants of Sudak (Soldaia) and Caffa (Teodosija) such as Andrea Guasco, Gianotto Lomellini and Gabriele de Promontorio, who found shelter in Poland after the Ottoman conquest of Crimea, did not cease to think about the recovery of their former cities. After the Turkish attacks on Rhodes and the seizure of Otranto many other European realms were urged by Pope Sixtus IV to join the fight against the sultan. The authorities of Genoa made, in their turn, preparations for the forthcoming anti-Ottoman campaign. The death of Mehemed II and the ongoing struggle for succession to the Ottoman throne was a most convenient moment to start the intervention. Mengli I Giray, the Tatar Khan, to whom the Turkish suzerainty had been burdensome, appeared to support the Genoese claim for gaining back the Crimean colonies. Moreover, the authorities of Genoa started a diplomatic offensive intended to gain support for the forth-coming military

expedition. In the Genoese strategy, King Casimir IV Jagiello of Poland was a key actor. However, the embassy sent to Cracow in 1481 turned back without any concrete results. Similar outcomes had the negotiations with other Christian realms and, eventually, the scheduled recovery of Crimea remained one of the many unachieved projects of the 15th century.

Nonetheless, in 1484, the conquest of Licostomo and Moncastro by the Ottomans renewed, on short term, the Polish interest for the Black Sea. Liviu Pilat focuses in the chapter *Dynastic Conflicts, Alliances and the Ottoman Imperial Policy in the Northern Black Sea (1489–1499)* on the consequences of the Ottoman victory, which changed drastically the balance of power in the region. One of the most evident mutations concerned the relations of Polish Kingdom with Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate. Enjoying the protection of the Porte as tributary states, both Moldavia and the Khanate started an aggressive policy towards Poland and Lithuania, which also tensed the political relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. While Mengli Girey intended to control the mouths of the Dniepr, Stephen of Moldavia schemed to provoke a war between Istanbul and Cracow. Thus, Stephen decided to support the creation of a Russian principality as Ottoman tributary state, an endeavour also sustained by a former grand vizier, Mesih pasha. The plan was a part of a wider anti-Polish project, which also included Maximilian of Habsburg and Ivan III of Moscow. Eventually, despite the Moldavian and Ottoman support, the pretender was defeated and captured which put an end to Stephen's plot. However, his anti-Polish policy continued in the next years reaching a climax in 1497 with an open confrontation between Moldavia and its powerful northern neighbour.

Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate are also the main actors of Michal Wasiucioneck's contribution *Entangled Histories, Entangled Chancelleries? Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate between Pax Mongolica and Pax Ottomanica*. While Liviu Pilat insisted on the political and military developments at the end of the 15th century, Michal Wasiucioneck focuses on chancellery practices in Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate as an indicator of their place in the Ottoman system.

At stake is what the author calls the 'Ottomanization' of documents in the case of tributary states of the Porte, a process well-studied in the Crimean Khanate but less-known in the Moldavian case. Michal Wasiucioneck argues that there are some features in documents issued by the Moldavian Prince for the internal use, which highlight the ruler's connection with the sultan, seen as the supreme source of authority. It is the case of *tuğra*-like cypher adopted by two Moldavian Princes Ștefan Tomșa II (1611–1615, 1621–1623) and Miron Barnovschi (1626–1629, 1633) in documents granted to the boyars or Moldavian

monasteries. In parallel with such borrowings from the Ottoman practice, both the Crimean as the Moldavian preserved their old-fashioned diplomatics' elements as a way to reinforce their traditional sources of legitimacy. While the reasons, which determined the rulers from Bahçesaray and Iași to adopt elements of Ottoman diplomatics could have been different, it is important to emphasise that the borrowings express their willingness to be integrated in the Ottoman hierarchy of power.

Two other chapters are dedicated to the political and military struggles in the Black Sea area towards the end of the 16th century. Dariusz Milewski's contribution *From Świerczowski to Wallachian Expedition of Jan Zamoyski: Rise of the Cossack Factor in Polish-Ottoman Relations (1574–1600)* deals with the emergence of the Cossacks as a political factor in the North-Eastern Black Sea. In the last quarter of the 16th century the incursions for plunder in territories submitted to the Porte tensioned the usually peaceful relations. Even worse, after 1574, the Cossacks were involved in the struggle for the Moldavian throne supporting ephemeral pretenders such as Iwan Podkova and Peter "the Cossack". Such involvement in territory submitted to the sultan was considered as a serious threat by the Ottomans who asked the Polish King to stop the incursions and to punish the responsible. As the King lacked the instruments able to solve the issue, the war was eventually avoided only due to the mediation of the English ambassador in Istanbul and to the diplomatic ability of the chancellor and hetman of the Polish Crown, Jan Zamoyski.

The Cossack issue was amplified in the last years of the 16th century by the "Long Turkish War" (1593–1606) and especially by the revolt of Wallachia and Moldavia against the Porte in November 1594. The chapter concerning *War and Diplomacy in the Black Sea Region during the "Long War"* put together several unpublished or well-known documents in an attempt to analyse the Ottoman policy towards the Black Sea and the Danube during the war. For the political circles in Istanbul the successful pursuit of the war in Hungary was intimately connected with the pacification of Wallachia and Moldavia and, implicitly, with the control of the Danube and the Black Sea. To achieve the goal, the Porte used both military and diplomatic measures. After the failure of the expedition in Wallachia in 1595, the Ottomans changed their strategy and tried to convince the rebel princes to abandon their allegiance to the Habsburgs. Thus, they used mediators trusted by both camps such as the English ambassador in Istanbul, Edward Barton or Meletios Pigas, the Patriarch of Alexandria and also *locum tenens* of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The latter used a wide range of arguments to convince Michael the Brave of Wallachia to accept the offered peace but, despite some progress, a full peace was never established. However, the negotiations had a side effect. Despite the diplomatic failure, the Danube

frontier and the Black Sea area entered in a period of stasis as from 1598 the Prince of Wallachia directed his attention towards other targets.

Eventually the Porte overcame the challenges represented by the Cossacks and the rebel princes. Even if the Cossacks raids still afflicted the empire for a while,<sup>18</sup> the Ottomans succeeded to reaffirm their grasp on the Black Sea and *pax ottomanica* remained the rule in the region until the rise of Russia as a Pontic power.

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The studies gathered in the present volume mirror the thematic diversity of the history of the Black Sea. Some of them insist on general topics and the role of the big powers in the shaping of the destiny of the region, while others focus on details and the role of minor political actors in the struggle for hegemony.

Despite the thematic diversity, the contributions underlined that in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern period the interest for the Black Sea, as a frontier zone between Christianity and Islam, was both strategic and commercial. War, religion and trade were used by different powers in their quest to achieve supremacy in the Black Sea. To simplify a more complex picture, it may be argued that, for a long period, the strategic goals remained almost the same: the hegemonic powers aimed to dominate sea by controlling the coasts or, at least, some key points (the Straits, the mouths of the Danube, the Crimean Peninsula, Caffa) and to eliminate other maritime powers from the area. Eventually, towards the end of the 15th century, the Ottoman Empire succeeded in transforming the zone in a sort of “inner lake” but even in the new circumstances, the previous trade routes continued to connect various regions inside and outside the Black Sea.

Using original manuscript and printed documents the authors employ different approaches and methods, which may explain why, sometimes, they may express divergent point of views on the same events. It is the case of the

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18 Victor Ostapchuk, “The Human Landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the Face of Cossack Naval Raids,” *Oriente Moderno*, 20/81 (2001), pp. 23–95; Ostapchuk, “Five Documents from the Topkapi Palace on the Ottoman Defense of the Black Sea against the Cossacks (1639),” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 11 (1987), pp. 49–104; Ostapchuk, “An Ottoman Gāzāname on Halil Pasha Naval Campaign against the Cossacks,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 14 (1990), no. 3–4, pp. 482–521; Ostapchuk, “Cossack Ukraine in and out of the Ottoman Orbit,” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gabor Kármán—Lovro Kunčević (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 123–152; Andrei Pippidi, “Cazacii navigatori, Moldova și Marea Neagră la începutul secolului al XVII-lea,” in *Marea Neagră. Puteri maritime—puteri terestre (sec. XIII–XVIII)*, ed. Ovidiu Cristea (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006), pp. 260–282.

consequences of the fall of Caffa in 1475 seen as a huge blow for the Polish and regional trade (Danuta Quirini-Poplawska), or, on the contrary, as a re-configuration of the system according to Ottoman aims (Ovidiu Cristea and Ovidiu Olar). The present introduction does not intend to settle the divergence. Further research will, certainly, enable a better understanding of the process as one of the aims of the volume is to stimulate the debate between historiographical schools and scholars.

Despite the unavoidable divergences the volume's goal is to draw a comprehensive picture of the Black Sea in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, which witnessed the rapid decline of the previous masters of the region (Byzantines, Mongols, Genoese, and Venetians) and the rise of a new power (the Ottoman Empire). By taking into account the impact of major powers and minor political actors, the book proposes a long-term perspective of regional history. It offers, hopefully, a better understanding of the political and commercial history of the Black Sea between the 14th and the 16th centuries, and provides insights into the political and economic developments of the region.

# The Genoese in the Black Sea (1261–1453): Metamorphoses of a Hegemony

*Șerban Papacostea*

At the end of the 11th century, the Latin West channelled towards the Eastern Mediterranean the energy it had recuperated in the past centuries through a vigorous, large-scale and longstanding conflict with the Islamic world, an action whose symbolic name is *the crusade*. A society with a strong demographic and economic growth, a numerous and well-trained military class, able of undertaking decisive actions, fast growing cities, especially in Italy—due mainly to its role as main intermediary in the trade between Asia and Europe—, an ecclesial and spiritual force—the Roman Church—with theocratical tendencies, a consequence of pope Gregory VII's reforms, these were the main factors of the strong offensive impulse of the Catholic world in the Eastern Mediterranean, *the crusade*, which, for several centuries, remained an important factor in the international relations of the age.

One of the main goals of these offensive waves of the Western world into the Eastern Mediterranean was the reestablishment of the direct contact with the Asian world, with its civilizational values and the no less desired products—spices and silk—, that were accessible only through intermediaries following the great geopolitical transformations from the 7th and 8th centuries, a consequence of the Arab conquests. From this time, the Arabs were the longstanding rulers of the Eastern Mediterranean, while the Black Sea, a subsidiary but not neglectable connection with inner Asia, was isolated from the Mediterranean region by the rigorous exclusivist regime imposed at the Straits—Bosporus and Dardanelles—by the Byzantine imperial power, determined to keep the vast material advantages resulting from the trade between Asia and Europe for itself.

The crusade stimulated decisively the development of cities—especially in Italy—after the conquest by the crusaders of several trade centres in Syria and Palestine, by making the oriental products more accessible and, equally, by frequently and massively employing their fleets for the transport of troops and equipment or even for military operations. Starting with the Third Crusade, the expeditions of the Western knights abandoned the land routes in favour of the sea routes that were quicker and more convenient. The naval strength of the Italian maritime cities—Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Amalfi—experienced a significant growth following these evolutions and increased their influence

in determining the directions of the military actions, strategy and tactics. The economic finality of the holy expeditions appears more clearly in the crusade projects from the 13th and 14th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the efforts of the crusaders installed in Syria and Palestine since the end of the 11th century, the Islamic barrier couldn't be pierced neither in the direction of the Persian Gulf, nor towards the Red Sea. This stalemate marked the limits of the crusade in the Eastern Mediterranean and foreshadowed its final fail. While the Eastern Mediterranean remained under the domination of Islam, the obstacle at the Straits, in the Byzantine area, was eventually removed. In 1204, the Fourth Crusade, with the decisive support of the Venetian fleet, conquered Constantinople and replaced the Byzantine authority from the Straits, opening the way towards the Black Sea, that will become in the future decades the main connection with inner Asia.

### 1 From Venetian Hegemony to Genoese Domination (1204–1261)<sup>2</sup>

Based on the agreements concluded with the leaders of the crusaders, the Venetians obtained not only important territorial positions—both in the islands and on the continent—from the former Byzantine imperial area, but also had all the privileges they had previously extorted from the emperors of Constantinople confirmed by their allies. Moreover, using the clause that gave them the right to exclude their rivals from the trade of the newly created Latin Empire, the Venetians practically dictated its commercial policy.

The Black Sea is not explicitly mentioned in the conventions between the Venetians and the crusaders, maybe because the Byzantine legacy in this area had been already contested in 1204 or was severely diminished.<sup>3</sup> Although the testimonies concerning the activity of the Mediterranean merchants in the Black Sea during this time are scarce, we can be sure, that in a quarter century, the Venetians had explored and knew the most part of the seashore and

1 Christopher Tyerman, *How to plan a Crusade. Reason and Religious War in the High Middle Ages* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).

2 Freddy Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne au Moyen Age. Le développement du domaine colonial vénitien (XII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Paris: de Boccard, 1959); Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *La Mer Noire des origines à la conquête ottomane*, (Munich: Societatea Academică Română, 1969); Michel Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>–début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, 1–11, (Rome, 1978); Evgeny Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa in the Black Sea region. Evolution and Transformation*, (New York-London: Routledge 2018), pp. 56–94.

3 Șerban Papacostea, "La Mer Noire: du monopole byzantine à la domination des Latins aux Détroits," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 27 (1988), pp. 49–71.



its main trade centres.<sup>4</sup> In 1232, a Venetian contract written in Constantinople signalled the capacity of the merchants to carry out their activity “all across the Great Sea” (one of the main denominations of the Black Sea during that age). In 1246–1247, while passing through Kiev, the missionary John of Plano Carpini noticed the presence in the city of a group of Latin merchants from Constantinople. Another Catholic missionary, William of Rubruck, also found Latin merchants from Constantinople in Sudak (Soldaia), Crimea’s main commercial centre at that time. Besides, Sudak (Soldaia)<sup>5</sup> was the starting point for two Venetian merchants, Niccolò and Maffeo Polo, who explored the Asian continent between 1259 and 1260.

The commercial cooperation between Venice and Genoa in the Latin Empire and especially in the Black Sea during that time was remarkable. The cooperation between the two main thalassocracies of the Mediterranean—a short respite of a quarter century in a long a bitter rivalry—ensured the essential naval defence of the empire founded by the crusaders and assaulted by numerous enemies. The end of this cooperation will hasten the fall of the Latin Empire.

## 2 Genoese Domination in the Black Sea<sup>6</sup>

A Genoese-Venetian agreement on a Mediterranean scale created the favourable conditions for the joint exploitation of the Black Sea Trade; the breaking of this agreement, also on a Mediterranean scale, ended their collaboration and, from one consequence to another, restructured “the whole political and economic map of the Levant”, according to the sharp observation of Roberto Sabatino Lopez.

4 Michael E. Martin, “The First Venetians in the Black Sea,” *Archeion Pontou*, 35 (1979), pp. 111–122; Martin, “The Venetians in the Byzantine Empire before 1204,” in *Byzantium and the West c. 850–c. 1200*, ed. J.D. Howard-Johnston, (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), pp. 201–214; Martin, “The Venetians in the Black Sea: a general survey,” in *The Eastern Mediterranean Frontier of Latin Christendom*, ed. Jace Stuckey, (London: Ashgate 2014), pp. 63–84; see also David Jacoby, “Byzantium, the Italian Maritime Powers and the Black Sea before 1204,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 100 (2007), pp. 677–699.

5 For Soldaia’s evolution during the Venetian hegemony in Constantinople see recently Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa*, 61, 63.

6 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929); Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă* (Bucharest: Academiei, 1935); Roberto S. Lopez, *Storia delle colonie genovesi nel Mediterraneo* (Genova: Zanichelli, 1996); Virgil Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012).

In June 1258, after repeated clashes, the Venetians and the Pisans drove the Genoese out of Acre, the main trade centre from the territories controlled by the crusaders in Palestine. Although they retreated to Tyre, another trade centre in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Genoese did not consent to their loss. Their refusal to accept this *fait accompli* determined a new political orientation of the commune in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ending the compromise with Venice, that had ensured their access to the Latin Empire and in the Black Sea, the Genoese authorities approached the Byzantine emperor exiled in Nicaea, Michael VIII Palaeologus (1257–1282), the founder of the last Byzantine dynasty. The joined interests of the two powers found their diplomatic expression in a famous document, the treaty concluded on 13 March 1261 at Nymphaion, the summer residence of the Nicaean emperors. In essence, the Treaty of Nymphaion substituted Venice with Genoa in the Byzantine Empire under the Palaeologian restoration.

Besides other numerous concessions—customs and tax exemptions, privileged settling grounds in various cities of the empire, the exclusion of their adversaries, excepting the Pisans, from the commercial activity of the empire under restoration—, Michael Palaeologus ensured an exceptional regime for the Genoese in the Black Sea: “Also, the emperor promises and agrees not to allow henceforth any Latin, excepting the Genoese and the Pisans, to travel and trade in the Black Sea, excepting his own [= the emperors’ men], whom shall bring him the money or the goods of our treasury. The Genoese shall not be hindered from travelling to the Black Sea and return with goods from there, but they shall be free to go and return, without any kommerkion [= customs]”.<sup>7</sup>

The exceptionally favourable regime obtained for their Black Sea trade by the Genoese negotiators of the treaty concluded with Byzantium is the evidence of their knowledge of the exceptional resources of the Black Sea trade, both the regional ones and those resulting from the establishment of the trade routes with inner Asia, through the territories of the two parts of the Mongol Empire neighbouring the Black Sea—the Golden Horde in the North, with its centre at Sarai, on the Volga, and the Iranian Ilkhanate in the South, with its centre at Tabriz.

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7 A. Sanguinetti and G. Bertolotto, *Nuova serie di documenti sulle relazioni di Genova coll’Impero Bizantino*, (Rome, 1902), 793, 796; Şerban Papacostea, “Byzance et les Détroits sous les premiers Paléologues,” *Il Mar Nero*, 4 (2000), pp. 151–160; Cecily J. Hilsdale, “The Imperial Image at the End of Exile. The Byzantine embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261),” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 64 (2010), pp. 151–199. For this embroidery see also Ida Toth, “The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese *Pallio* and the Silken Diplomacy of Michael VIII Palaiologos,” in *Objects in Motion: the Circulation of Religion and Sacred Objects in the Late Antique and Byzantine World*, ed. Hallie G. Meredith, (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), pp. 91–109.

Their determination to fully exploit this commercial potential explains the extraordinary intensity of the Genoese activity in the Black Sea during the first decades after Nymphaion, noticed by the contemporaries. The Byzantine historian Pachymeres observed that not long after the Genoese had settled in the Straits, they were sailing also in the middle of winter, in extremely dangerous conditions, around the Black Sea, on their ships.<sup>8</sup>

Settled permanently on the Bosphorus since 1267, at Pera (Galata), a neighbourhood of Constantinople, which they will turn into the most solid base of their domination of the Black Sea, the Genoese quickly entered all the main trade centres close to the sea. In the territories regained by Byzantium on the Western shore of the Black Sea, the Genoese are mentioned by the sources at Vicina and Mesembria. A Byzantine settlement on the maritime Danube, Vicina, whose location isn't yet clear, was the centre of an intense Genoese commercial activity, whose significant documentary traces can be found in the documents instrumented in 1281 by the Genoese notary Gabriele di Predono. Until the middle of the 14th century, Vicina will remain the main centre of Genoese trade at the Danube.

In the territories under the direct control of the Golden Horde, of paramount importance was the Genoese settlement of Caffa, on the Eastern shore of the Crimea. Founded on the ruins of the ancient settlement of Theodosia, on the bases of a—most likely—verbal agreement with the rulers of the Golden Horde, Caffa will become during the following decades one of the most important European trade centres and a pillar of the developing hegemony of the Genoese in the Northern Black Sea.<sup>9</sup> A Venetian source observes that, at the end of the 13th century, the inhabitants of Caffa had commercial connections “with all the lands in the North, the East and the West”,<sup>10</sup> thus explaining the city's rapidly growing wealth. Caffa was closely connected with Tana, situated at the mouth of the Don into the Azov Sea and the starting point of the route towards Central Asia and the Extreme East, which was massively and almost exclusively exploited by the Genoese during this first stage of their domination of the Black Sea. Since the last decade of the 13th century we also have the first mention about the Genoese activity at the Dniester Liman, at Maurocastrum (Moncastru) or Cetatea Albă (Bialgorod).

8 Georgios Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, ed. Imm. Bekker, 1, (Bonn, 1835), p. 419.

9 Michel Balard, *La Roumanie*, 1, pp. 199–215; Virgil Ciociltan, “Aux origines d'une confusion historique: Nicéphore Grégoras et la fondation de Caffa,” *Il Mar Nero*, 4 (1999), pp. 143–150.

10 The statement belongs to chronicler Daniele Barbaro quoted by Raymond J. Loenertz, “Menego Schiavo, esclave, corsair seigneur d'Ios,” *Studi Veneziani*, 9 (1967), pp. 333–334.

On the Southern shore of the Black Sea, their most important position was at Trebizond, the meeting point of the trade routes from the Black Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. This connection became extremely important after Trebizond entered the sphere of influence of the Mongol Empire in Iran, during the reign of emperor John Komnenos (1282–1297). Settled in large numbers in Trebizond,<sup>11</sup> the Genoese took over an important share of the settlement's commercial function.

Also on the Southern shore, the Genoese are mentioned before the end of the 13th century at Sinope, Amissos (Samsun), Amastri (Samastro) and Heraclea Pontica (Puntarachia). The Caucasian shore also received the attention of the Genoese during this early stage of their penetration of the Black Sea. At Sevastopolis, one of the main centres of the slave trade, they are first mentioned in 1280, and at Faxium (Batumi) in 1290.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, in several decades, the Genoese had explored all the areas and were actively settled in most of the centres of the Black Sea shore, taking over their main commercial functions. First of all, they've gained control over the trade route between Europe and Asia through the Black Sea, which became during this age the main way for obtaining spices and silk, a rapid source of wealth.

However, the Genoese were not content with this first gain in the Black Sea trade—the connection between Asia and the Mediterranean. They had also successfully infiltrated the inter-Pontic relations, substituting most of the local populations in the traditional exchanges between the local trade centres. The direct commercial advantage resulting from this exchange was considerably enhanced by the gains obtained through naval transport, from naval taxes—a source of great profits.

The exceptional revenue realized by the Genoese from the Black Sea trade was due mainly to the privileged regime they were ensured following the Treaty of Nymphaion. The preservation and even the consolidation of this regime was their main goal during the first decades of their domination over the Black Sea

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11 For the Genoese relations with Trebizond see Serghei P. Karpov, *L'Impero di Trebisonda: Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204–1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali*, (Rome: Il Velro, 1986).

12 For the Genoese slave trade in the Black Sea see Hannah Barker, "Christianities in Conflict: The Black Sea as a Genoese Slaving Zone in the Later Middle Ages," in *Slaving Zones. Cultural Identities, Ideologies and Institutions in the institution of Global Slavery*, eds. Jeff Fynn-Paul—Damian Allan Pargas, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 50–69; Mikhail B. Kizilov, "The Black Sea and the Slave Trade: the Role of Crimean Maritime Towns in the Trade in Slaves and Captives in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," *International Journal of Maritime History*, 17 (2005), pp. 211–235.

and remained also during the following century, in different conditions, the ideal frame towards which they tended.

The clause of the Treaty of Nymphaion concerning the Pisans, hard to neglect as rivals by the Genoese, became void after 1282 when, following the catastrophic defeat inflicted on their fleet at Meloria by the Genoese, Pisa left the race of the main Mediterranean thalassocracies.<sup>13</sup> The right kept by the Byzantines to trade in the Black Sea—otherwise limited, according to the treaty, to the ships of the imperial treasury—, will be rigorously restricted by the Genoese. A complaint sent to the patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory II (1283–1289) and resent by him to the general logothete, incriminated the intolerable abuses committed by the Genoese in the Black Sea, such as forcing the Greek to unload the merchandises from the imperial ships and to load them on their own ships, actions during which they sometimes made use of their weapons.<sup>14</sup> The ferocity shown by the Genoese in the monopolization, even by force, of the naval transport and its inherent advantages, shows the wealth gained from this activity. Although remote, this information reveals the serious effect, which this practice had on the Byzantine-Genoese relations. It goes without saying that if the Genoese resorted to such means against the imperial authorities and despite the Treaty of Nymphaion, they were even more unscrupulous concerning the interests of the other Black Sea nations, who were prevented from making use of naval transport and enjoying its advantages.

Ever since the first years after the Treaty of Nymphaion, the Genoese had shown an exceptional interest for the Northern coast of the Black Sea, under the rule of the Golden Horde. When the Genoese from the Black Sea founded their colony at Caffa, Genoa tried, during the peace negotiations with Venice (1268), to impose—in the eventuality of a ceasefire and of a Venetian comeback in the region—to the rival republic the acceptance of a lacunary clause that forbade their direct access to the great trade route under the rule of the Golden Horde, i.e. at Tana, “*quod non iretur ad Tanam*”.<sup>15</sup> A minimum condition for the restoration of peace, the clause concerning Tana dominated the Venetian-Genoese relations in the Black Sea until the Ottoman conquest.

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13 For the Pisans presence in Romania in before and after Meloria see Catherine Otten-Froux, “Documents inédits sur les Pisans en Roumanie aux XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in *Les Italiens à Byzance. Edition et présentation de documents*, eds. Michel Balard, Catherine Otten-Froux, Angeliki E. Laiou, (Paris: Sorbonne, 1987), pp. 153–195.

14 Angeliki E. Laiou, “Monopoly and Privilege: the Byzantine reaction to the Genoese presence in the Black Sea,” in *Oriente e Occidente tra Medioevo ed età moderna. Studi in onore di Geo Pitarino*, ed. by Laura Baletto, 11, (Genova: Brigati, 1997), pp. 675–686.

15 Roberto Cessi, “La tregua fra Venezia e Genova nella seconda metà del sec. XIII,” *Archivio Veneto-Tridentino*, 4 (1923), p. 10.

That's how profitable was the gain obtained through this privileged exploitation, without any direct competition, of this connection with the Asian continent. The attempts to gain or restrict access to this route were the main causes of the three Venetian-Genoese wars waged in and for the Black Sea.

Therefore, the regime of the Black Sea trade formulated by the Treaty of Nymphaion created exceptionally favourable conditions for the activity of the Genoese merchants: the restriction of the competition due to the clauses of the treaty and its gradual elimination through acts of force allowed the Genoese to hold a quasi-monopoly, buying the merchandises in the most favourable conditions, taking over most of the naval transport and making huge profits. According to the Byzantine historian George Pachymeres, the massive exploitation of the Black Sea trade by the Genoese had tipped the scales of power—wealth and naval forces—in favour of Genoa and against Venice.

At the end of his book, *Divisement du monde*, later renamed *Il Milione*, whose text was written in a Genoese prison, where he was detained as a was prisoner during the final years of the 13th century, Marco Polo explains his silence on the Black Sea (*Mar Maggiore*). The region was so well-known by his European readers—Genoese, Pisans “and many others”—that, as the illustrious Venetian states, it was futile to tarry over realities well-known to his contemporaries. Being at the time “a crossroads (*plaque tournante*) of international trade”, according to Gheorghe Brătianu's inspired formula,<sup>16</sup> the Black Sea amply rewarded the main intermediaries of this function, i.e. the Genoese. However, just because it had obtained the main status in the Eurasian exchanges, the Black Sea shall become the object of violent clashes for more than a century between Venice, determined to open its way towards the source of these miraculous treasures, and Genoa, committed to defend the privileged it had obtained at Nymphaion and the immense advantages that came alongside it.

Venice's tolerance for the extraordinary consolidation of the Genoese hegemony to its disadvantage ended in 1291, when the last crusader stronghold in the Holy Land and the outpost of the republic's Eastern trade, the fortress of Accra, was conquered by the Muslims. Banished from this privileged position, Venice forced its entrance into the Black Sea, especially towards the Northern coast, where it settled after an agreement with the almighty Nogai, one of the main chieftains of the Golden Horde. This Venetian initiative, that seriously threatened the system of Genoese domination in the Black Sea, was the main

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16 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, “La Mer Noire plaque tournante du trafic international à la fin du Moyen Age,” *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, 21 (1944), pp. 36–69.

cause of the *First War of the Straits* (1294–1299),<sup>17</sup> during which Venice and Genoa competed for the exploitation of the Black Sea trade. Despite the great victories it had gained at Lajazzo and Curzola, at the conclusion of the Treaty of Milan (1299) Genoa was unable to force its rival to entirely abandon its autonomous commercial activity in the territories of the Golden Horde; it had to settle with a long-term postponement—of probably twenty years—of the return of the Venetian trade in the Black Sea and of the presence of the Venetian warships in the region. The Treaty of Milan and its unavoidable consequences were the starting point of a new stage for the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea.

### 3 The Genoese Hegemony under the Direction of the Metropolis (1299–1343)<sup>18</sup>

Genoa made good use of the respite obtained through the Treaty of Milan, consolidating its positions in the Black Sea and making them able to withstand the old and new adversities attracted by its commercial hegemony. The golden age of exploitation without major competition, inaugurated by the Treaty of Nymphaion, was over at the end of the *First War of the Straits*. The new phase, that promised to be far more difficult, because it introduced permanently—after the respite settled by the Treaty of Milan—the commercial and naval power of Venice in the Black Sea, required appropriate measures for the predictable dangers. The timespan between the Treaty of Nymphaion and the Treaty of Milan was characterized, as far as the activity of the Genoese in the Black Sea is concerned, by the free, tumultuous and even anarchic individual initiatives. The new situation created by the Treaty of Milan demanded the intervention of the metropolis, both for the protection of its subjects' activity and in order to remove the serious inconveniences often caused by their spontaneous and uncontrolled actions.

17 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, "Les origines de la guerre de Curzola (1294–1299) entre Gênes et Venise," *Mélanges d'histoire générale*, ed. Constantin Marinescu, 1, (Cluj: Publications de l'Institut d'Histoire Générale, 1927), pp. 87–100.

18 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, "Les Vénitiens dans la mer Noire au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle après la deuxième guerre des Détroits," *Echos d'Orient*, 37 (1934), pp. 148–162.; Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekides, "Venise et la Mer Noire du XI<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Thesaurismata*, 7 (1970), pp. 15–51; Giovanni Forcheri, *Navi e navigazione a Genova nel Trecento. Il "Liber Gazarie"*, (Genova, 1974); Șerban Papacostea, "Les Génois et la Horde d'Or: le tournant de 1313," in *Chemins d'Outre Mer. Etudes d'histoire de la Méditerranée médiévale offerts à Michel Balard*, ed. Damien Coulon, (Paris: Sorbonne, 2004), pp. 651–659.

The accommodation to the new situation began with the fortification of the main Genoese centres in the Black Sea, in order to shelter the inhabitants and their goods and to promote the general interests of Genoese trade. The earliest manifestation of this new policy can be seen in Pera, the warranty for the free navigation of the Genoese in and out of the Mediterranean. Favoured by the increasingly serious situation of the Byzantine Empire, threatened by the perspective of a new crusade for the restoration of the Latin Empire, by the progresses of the Turks in Asia Minor and by the actions of the Catalan mercenaries, Genoa systematically consolidated its position from Pera. Gradually, the colony evolved from the its original status of strictly controlled autonomy, imposed by Michael VIII Palaeologus, to that of quasi-sovereignty, in less than two decades after the conclusion of the Treaty of Milan. In March 1304, threatened by foreign hostile forces, emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282–1328) made substantial concessions to the Genoese, inscribed in a new privilege.<sup>19</sup> The territory granted to his guests in the previous century was widely expanded, a clue for the prosperity of the Bosphorus colony and its perspectives of development. The imperial privilege allowed the Genoese to raise public buildings, fortify their homes and even surround the conceded land with a moat, an important stage towards their complete autonomy. The interdiction to erect a defensive wall around the settlement, explicitly inscribed in the imperial privilege (*preter murum castris*), will not last long against the rapid development of the Genoese power in the Straits and the Black Sea. The juridical status of the Genoese from the Byzantine Empire was also consolidated after the emperor formally renounced his right to appoint vassals from their ranks and implicitly to remove them from the influence of the authorities in Pera. From a commercial point of view, the document of 1304 confirmed all the previous privileges of the Genoese—*libertates sine impedimenta*—, including that of using their own trade weights and especially that of taxing the inhabitants of their settlement. It is true that the privilege forbade Pera to take foreign citizens under its protection, but this interdiction will soon fall into disuse, given the determination of the Genoese to maximize their profits though the dominant position they had ensured at the Straits. In fact, based on the position of strength they had gained between the 13th and 14th centuries, they strived and managed to attract most of the goods flow in and from the Black Sea. Within decades, the income of the customs in Pera surpassed six times that of the imperial customs in Constantinople.

In 1304, the consolidated relationship with Byzantium determined Genoa to issue the statute of Pera—*Magnum Volumen Peyre*—, drafted ever since

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19 Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282–1328*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), pp. 57–75, 101–113, 183–185.



1300, an event that marked decisively the autonomous regime of the settlement. Based on this code of laws, otherwise an exact copy of Genoa's juridical regime, the Genoese settlements from the Black Sea, excepting Caffa, were subordinated to the authorities in Pera.

Forced by the circumstances and by its growing weakness, Byzantium offered new concessions to the Genoese or assented tacitly their increasingly bolder violations of the perfected agreements. The repeated attempts by the declining empire to contain the abusive extension of the agreements by its guests in Pera proved futile.

Inspired by its success with Pera, gradually consolidated after 1299, Genoa saw itself as entitled and was tempted to extend the privileged status forcefully obtained from the Byzantines in the Bosphorus to the whole ensemble of its Black Sea positions. The regime of the Black Sea trade would, therefore, be aligned to that of the command centre in Pera and together they would have formed the frame of the Genoese hegemony in the region. The conception of the leadership in Genoa concerning this aspect can be easily observed from the title of its newly appointed representative in Pera, Gavino Tartaro, invested in 1300—therefore after the conclusion of the Treaty of Milan—with the title of “vicar for the commune of Genoa in all the empire of Romania and the Great Sea”. The establishment of this institution represents the first clue of Genoa's intention to extend the privileged regime of Pera to the ensemble of its Black Sea trade and—generally—in the Byzantine Empire. The main components of the under-building Genoese commercial hegemony were, as in Pera, on the one hand the preferential customs regime, if not the total exemption from customs, an advantage that considerably increased their commercial profit and consolidated the position of the main centre at the expense of the competing settlements, and on the other hand the building of fortifications, that ensured the safety of their own merchants against potential aggressors. A whole series of other advantages were linked to this essential frame.

The main tensions and conflicts generated by the new Genoese policy were signalled at Caffa and Trebizond, the main centres of the Black Sea trade, alongside Pera.

In the empire of the Golden Horde, the main source of tensions between the Tatars and the Genoese was the latter's claim to fortify their settlement at Caffa and even the effective fortification of the colony as a show of strength, without the permission of khan Tokhta (1291–1312).<sup>20</sup> When he decided to

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20 Nicola Di Cosmo, “Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea frontier in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: convergences and conflicts,” in *Turco-Mongol Nomads and Sedentary Societies*, eds. Reuven Amitai—Michal Biran, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 412–413; Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea*, pp. 163–173.

face the Genoese for this defiance, Tokhta sent a large army to conquer Caffa, and the settlement fell, but only after eight months of siege (1308). The vast means that were employed and the duration of the siege are proof for the existence at Caffa, at this date, of strong fortifications, already built during the previous years. The success of the Tatar khan did not last. After they left Caffa, the Genoese imposed a trade embargo—*devetum*, according to contemporary sources—against the territories of the Golden Horde, depriving the Tatars of one of their main sources of income. In 1313, after the coronation of a new khan, Uzbek (1313–1341), the Golden Horde capitulated. The new khan not only allowed the Genoese to return to Caffa, but he also granted them the right to fortify their settlement. Thus, in Caffa, as in Pera, the premises of evolution from autonomy to sovereignty were created. The following years will register the brightest achievement of this tendency.

A similar evolution can be remarked for Trebizond as well. The chronology of the events is uncertain, but their sense is clear. Most likely in 1304, encouraged—here also—by their success with Pera, which was mentioned deliberately, the Genoese asked emperor Alexios II Komnenos (1297–1330), among others, to renounce his control on the commercial activities of their businessmen, to exempt them of all taxes—firstly, of course, the customs—and to cease to pretend formal manifestations of dependency. Refused by the emperor, the Genoese in Trebizond left the city, according to the dispositions they had received, as a manifestation of a trade embargo. There followed a time of armed conflicts, during which the best documented episode is the joint Crimean expedition of the Trapezuntines and the Turks from Sinope, at Caffa, in 1313. After prolonged negotiations between 1314 and 1316, a peace treaty, concluded on 26 October 1316, ended the hostilities between the Genoese and the Trapezuntines, with favourable conditions for the first. The Genoese obtained their own ground in Trebizond, at the arsenal, with the right to fortify it and an extraterritorial status that implied the exemption from the imperial customs' *kommerkion* on this territory. However, this concession was granted to the Genoese exclusively and did not include their guests of other origins.

In Pera, Caffa and Trebizond—the triangle of the great international trade in the Black Sea during this age—, the Genoese managed to extort vast privileges from the local rulers, according to their exclusivist demands. Lords of the Bosphorus, the Genoese deliberately tried to impose to the entire Black Sea a regime as close to the hegemonic objective inscribed in the Black Sea clause of the Treaty of Nymphaion as possible.

Following the success of this first decisive operation—the fortification of their main Black Sea centres—, where they certainly had the initiative, in 1314 the authorities in Genoa created a central institution meant to regulate and supervise the trade of the Genoese in the Black Sea and their activity here in

general, named *Octo sapientes super factis navigandi et Maris Majoris* (“The eight wise men in problems of navigation and of the Great Sea”) and subsequently rebaptized *Officium Gazarie* (Gazaria being the ancient name for the “land of the Khazars”, being the Crimea in a narrow sense and the empire of the Golden Horde in a broad sense). The decision of establishing this body of regulation and supervision for the Black Sea trade was justified by the conclusion that trade “in the Great Sea and Gazaria” affected the whole Genoese commune, all its citizens and its “districtuals” (a word that designated the inhabitants of the neighbouring county, depending on the centre). Therefore, the decision was a clear statement concerning the key role played by the Black Sea trade in Genoa’s economy and, implicitly, the manifestation of the metropolis’ intention to systematically organise the exploitation of the extraordinary possibilities and perspectives, which the Black Sea offered for its trade.

The establishment of the council of the “eight wise men”, meant to coordinate the Black Sea trade from the centre signalled the decision to end the anarchic and over-individualistic activity of the Genoese in the Black Sea, which was no longer suited with the new situation following the Treaty of Milan. Following the general observation that “the Black Sea is filled with corsairs”<sup>21</sup>—many of them from their own ranks—the new Genoese court announced a series of efficient measures to end that situation that was detrimental for the interests of the Ligurian Republic in the region. The specific measures elaborated during the years by the “wise men” of Genoa were meant and partially succeeded to make the activity of the Genoese obey the rules from the centre.

One of Genoa’s most significant and pressing preoccupations was the urgent reconstruction of Caffa and the procuration of the necessary means for this goal. Some ordinances issued in 1316, forming together the “Code concerning Caffa” (*Ordo de Caffa*), met this urgent need. All ships sailing to the Northern coast of the Black Sea that passed Caffa during their voyage and the ones sailing back were obligated to lay at anchor for at least one day in the settlement’s docks and pay a tax for anchoring, carefully calculated according to the ship type, its tonnage and cargo. Those who opened and sold their merchandises in the settlement were taxed according to the local customs tariff. The attempt to avoid this obligation was sanctioned with heavy fines. Before entering the Black Sea, the commanders of the ships were forced to leave substantial collaterals at Pera, which were given back to them at their return, but only after they had proved the payment of the taxes in Caffa.

A series of commercial measures tended to concentrate as much as possible from the regional goods flow at Caffa, to the disadvantage of the other

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21 *Imposicio Officii Gazarie*, in *Monumenta Historiae Patriae. Leges Municipales*, Augustae Taurinorum, 1883, col. 378.

settlements. The Genoese citizens and those sharing their status were forbidden to station for more than three days at Soldaia (Sudak)—at that time still a thriving commercial centre—and strictly forbidden to carry out any commercial activities in the rival centre. In order to discourage the smugglers, another decision prevented the Genoese from unloading merchandises on the shore between Caffa and Soldaia (Sudak). The maintenance of these measures, given the Genoese naval and commercial supremacy, will unavoidably lead to the decline of Soldaia (Sudak) end, eventually, to its subordination to Caffa, an evolution that lasted several decades. Drastic measures to limit the commercial activity of the Genoese were adopted regarding Solkhat—the centre of the Tatar authority in the Crimea—and especially at Tana, the farthest outpost at the junction between the sea and the Eurasian continent. During 1316, together with the measures concerning Soldaia (Sudak) and Solkhat, the Genoese authorities forbade their subjects to “winter at Tana” and to build or own houses in the aforementioned settlement. The effort of the Genoese authorities to extend the navigation and trade restriction concerning Tana to all the trade agents from and outside the Black Sea will soon become the main cause of the great political and military confrontation in the region. The Black Sea shoreline stretching from the North to the North-West that Genoa wanted to control and subdue to its own commercial interests is known from the founding act of the Caffa bishopric, in 1318, at Genoa’s initiative. Seeing the settlement’s great prosperity, achieved in only a few years, Rome granted the newly-founded bishopric jurisdiction over the territories from Sarai on the Volga until Varna, in Bulgaria, and from the sea until the Russian territories. Gradually, during the following decades, the Genoese will attain control over the shoreline ruled at the time by the Golden Horde and will subordinate the activity of the main trade centres in the area to their commercial interests, mainly in order to ensure and consolidate the role of main organiser and beneficiary of regional trade for their settlement in Caffa.

At the same time, drastic measures were taken concerning the lucrative slave trade—one of the main merchandises provided by the Black Sea—, which the Genoese strived and mostly managed to reserve exclusively for themselves. The slaves bought in any of the Northern Black Sea or Caucasian centres were to be brought at Caffa and from here loaded on Genoese ships that transported them in the Mediterranean. A special office—*Officium Sancti Anthonii*—was established, to tax the selling and buying of slaves. Generally, and not only in the case of the transport of slaves, the Genoese managed to seize an important part of the naval taxes and the huge profit made from the exploitation of this trade area. The authorities in Caffa even managed to force the rival centre of Sinope, under the Seljuks, after repeated confrontations caused by

commercial rivalry, not to build ships with larger cargo capacity than that indicated by themselves, an interdiction that was maintained until the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4 The Assaulted and Saved Hegemony<sup>23</sup>

The forceful return of the Venetians in the Black Sea and their determination to found their own settlements—that would have unavoidably become competing centres for the Genoese and a stimulating factor of the anti-Genoese resistance of the local powers—was at the origin of the deep tensions and clashes that degenerated in great armed conflicts during their most terrible moments.

Twenty years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Milan, in 1319, the Venetians obtained from Emperor Alexios II of Trebizond (1297–1330) the right to maintain a dock in his capital, to settle in their own neighbourhood, to have a consul and—most importantly—the right to freedom of movement on his territory, that opened the way towards the Persian Ilkhanate, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.<sup>24</sup>

Probably simultaneously, the Venetians also entered the territories of the Golden Horde. The mention of a Venetian consul at Tana around 1323–1325<sup>25</sup>

22 For the slave trade in the Black Sea during the 15th century see M. Balard, “Esclavage en Crimée et sources fiscales génoise au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 22 (1996), pp. 9–17; Ștefan Andreescu, “Un act genovez din 1453 sau despre limitele metodei cantitative,” in Andreescu, *Izvoare noi cu privire la istoria Marii Negre* (Bucarest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2015), pp. 42–60.

23 Camillo Manfroni, “Le relazioni fra Genova l’Impero bizantino e i Turchi,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 28 (1898), pp. 577–858; Mario Brunetti, “Contributo ala storia delle relazioni Veneto-genovesi dal 1348 al 1350,” *Miscellanea di storia veneta*, 9 (1916), pp. 1–160; Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, “Notizie da Caffa,” in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, 111, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1962), pp. 266–295; Michel Balard, “A propos de la bataille du Bosphore. L’expédition génoise de Paganino Doria à Constantinople,” *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4 (1970), pp. 431–469; Maria Mercedes Costa, “Sulla Battaglia del Bosforo (1352),” *Studi Veneziani*, 14 (1972), pp. 197–210; Constantin Kyrris, “John Cantacuzenos, the Genoese, the Venetians and the Catalans,” *Byzantina*, 4 (1972), pp. 331–356; Giovanna Petti Balbi, “Caffa e Pera a metà del Trecento,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 16 (1978), pp. 217–228; Nicola Di Cosmo, “Mongols and Merchants,” pp. 391–424.

24 *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum sive acta et diplomata res venetas, grecas sive Levantis illustrantia*, 1, ed. Georg M. Thomas, Venetia, 1880, pp. 122–124; Karpov, *L’Impero di Trebisonda*, pp. 77–79.

25 Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, II (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1886), p. 182 (“à partir de 1325 environ, il existe des preuves de l’existence de ce fonctionnaire”; Heyd quotes some registers of now lost books of *Misti*); also Giustiniana Migliardi O’Riordan, Mihnea Berindei, “Venise et la Horde d’Or fin XIII<sup>e</sup>—début du

indicates the presence of a fairly significant number of Venetians or the intention to prepare their colonization of this settlement. However, only in 1332 did the Golden Horde grant Venice the right to maintain its own community in Tana, granting them land and establishing their commercial and customs regime. In 1334, Venice decides to name a consul in Tana for a two-years term.

The Venetian presence in Tana undermined the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea in a vital point. Ever since the first years after they entered the Black Sea, following the Treaty of Nymphaion, when they negotiated peace with Venice with the help of the Roman Curia, the Genoese conditioned the conclusion of the agreement on the acceptance of their demand for the Venetians not to settle in Tana: “*quod non iretur ad Tanam*”.<sup>26</sup> The clause proposed by the Genoese was meant to prevent the direct access of the Venetians to the great trade route connecting the Northern Black Sea with Central Asia and the Far East, from where spices and especially silk came in large quantities. A negative evolution for Genoa, the settlement of the Venetians in Tana considerably increased the permanent tension between the two main Mediterranean thalassocracies—as its effects unfolded—, until it developed into an armed conflict during the *Second War of the Straits* (1350–1355).

The outbreak of hostilities was delayed by an unexpected reaction of Djanibeg Khan of the Golden Horde (1342–1357), who used the pretext of an incident happened at Tana between a Tatar and a Venetian to end—in 1343—the privileged regime of the two maritime powers in his territories, attacked and occupied Tana and besieged Caffa for a long time. Sharing the same enemy for several years, Venice and Genoa became allies and delayed their own conflict’s resolution. However, the fundamental tendencies of the Venetian and Genoese Black Sea policy still manifested themselves during their short alliance. Using the situation created by the khan’s actions, the Genoese of Caffa, who withstood the Tatar assault behind their strong walls, strived to concentrate the whole trade with and through the Golden Horde in their own centre and to permanently remove the Venetian thorn from Tana. The Venetian diplomats who were in Caffa during the hostilities mentioned in their reports that it was precisely this tendency of the Genoese policy in the region—the consolidation of Caffa’s sovereignty against the Tatar power and, consequently, the decision

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XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, 29 (1988), no. 2, pp. 243–256 (especially 247: “La communauté des Vénitiens commerçant à La Tana était devenue assez importante et y était suffisamment implantée pour être représentée par un consul. La présence de ce fonctionnaire est attestée par un acte de 1326 mail il est vraisemblable qu’il avait été nommé auparavant”); Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea*, p. 197.

26 See below n. 30.

to dictate the rules of regional trade—that caused the reaction of the Tatar khan and motivated his decision to conquer Caffa.<sup>27</sup>

The failure of the Tatar siege at Caffa, whose fortifications withstood the repeated Tatar assaults, emphasizing the weakness of the Golden Horde, determined the Genoese to apply even more rigorously than before their exclusivist commercial agenda in the Northern Black Sea and to prevent all Mediterranean or Black Sea merchants—excepting their own, naturally—from entering Tana. The Byzantine historian Nicephorus Gregoras vigorously condemns the Genoese claim of forbidding the Byzantines and Venetians from sailing in the “Maeotis” (the Sea of Azov), at Tana, at Kerson and in all the shore regions under the rule of the “Scythians” (i.e. the Tatars) beyond the “Istros” (the Danube).<sup>28</sup> The first who felt the effects of this prohibition were the Byzantines, whose relations with the Genoese oscillated between the strict application of the Treaty of Nymphaion and the efforts of the imperial power to loosen or even remove the Genoese grip. The tensions reached a peak in 1346, after the Genoese occupied the Byzantine island of Chios. In order to sustain the unavoidable conflict with the Genoese, emperor John VI Cantacuzenus (1347–1354) decided to restore the Byzantine naval power by building commercial and military ships, and lowered the customs in Constantinople in order to compensate the huge loss of the imperial treasury due to the Genoese customs house in Pera, whose tariffs were lower and therefore attracted the largest share of the goods flow passing through the Straits. Having correctly predicted the danger, the Genoese in Pera reacted accordingly: in August 1348 they attacked and destroyed the shipyard in Constantinople and the ships under construction there. The emperor’s attempt to restart the rebuilding of the fleet was annihilated by a new attack—equally efficient and vigorous—organised by the authorities of Pera. John Cantacuzenus resumed his anti-Genoese actions in 1351, when he allied himself with Venice in a supreme attempt to end the crippling dependency on Genoa. The treaty concluded between John Cantacuzenus and Venice foreshadowed the destruction of Pera and the banishment of the Genoese from the Bosphorus. In response to the Genoese blockade at the entrance in the Black Sea the allies besieged Pera and initiated a series of naval actions against the Genoese positions in the Black Sea: it was the beginning of the *Second War of the Straits* (1350–1355). The anti-Genoese coalition was joined by the Catalans; in exchange, the Genoese were the beneficiaries of the saving support from the Ottoman Turks who occupied the Asia side of the Bosphorus. The failure of the allies to remove the Genoese from the Straits determined the Venetians

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27 Morozzo della Rocca, “Notizie”, p. 283; Ciociltan, *The Mongols*, p. 203.

28 Nikephor Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, I, ed. L. Schopen, (Bonn, 1830), p. 877.

and the Catalans to retreat to the Mediterranean in order to continue the war there. Alone against the Genoese, the Byzantines capitulated and accepted the conditions imposed by their adversaries, first of all, the interdiction to sail to Tana without the permission of the Genoese. The Venetian-Genoese hostilities ended by a compromise peace (1355), after Venice accepted to give up its trade in Tana, but for only three years. The core cause of the discord between the two great Italian trade republics continued to affect their relations and foreshadowed a new outbreak of hostilities between them. The Genoese policy in the Black Sea during the war and immediately after the peace of 1355 will only sharpen the conflict of interests between the Venetians and the Genoese and start a new War of the Straits two decades later. Genoa was determined to maintain its Pontic hegemony, especially in the territories of the Golden Horde and above all, at Tana, in order to control and exploit according to its own interests and rules the regional trade that was the source of its extraordinary wealth and power accumulated in the years after 1261. In its turn, Venice was resolute not to be deprived of the immense advantages offered by the Black Sea trade and by its connection to Central Asia and the Far East. The conflicting interests of the two thalassocracies further shaped the course of the events in the Black Sea that reverberated across a vast area in Europe and Asia.

## 5 New Horizons of the Genoese Hegemony (1355–1381)<sup>29</sup>

The partial failure of Genoa against Venice concerning the navigation to Tana did not prevent the Genoese from following their goals: on the long term, the removal of their commercial rivals from the mouth of the Don, and in the near future taking control of the Golden Horde's Black Sea shore. In order to prevent the development of competing centres in the region—that could, eventually, become strategical bases able to dispute their hegemony in the Northern Black Sea—the Genoese gradually occupied the main positions on the North-Western shore of the Black Sea, under the rule of the Tatar power. The

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29 Luigi Agostino Casati, *La Guerra di Chioggia e la pace di Torino. Saggio storico con documenti inediti*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1866); Petti Balbi, *Caffa e Pera*, pp. 217–228; Şerban Papacostea, “Quod non iretur ad Tanam. Un aspect fundamental de la politique génoise dans la mer Noire au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 17 (1974), pp. 201–217; Papacostea, “De la guerre du Bosphore à la guerre de Tenedos: rivalités commerciales et alignements politiques dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe dans la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Coloniser au Moyen Age*, eds. Michel Balard—Alain Ducellier, (Paris: Arman Colin, 1995), pp. 341–352.



vast program of commercial policy conceived in the previous decades by the Genoese authorities entered its active phase during the wars with the Golden Horde, Venice and its allies and after the conclusion of the peace of 1355.

Even before 1347, when the war with the Golden Horde was still raging, during the punitive expeditions against the Tatar shore, the Genoese of Caffa occupied the significant strategical centre of Cembalo (Simbolon, Balaklava), in order to prevent their adversaries from building a naval base on the Western shore of the Crimea, a very dangerous eventuality in their eyes. Between 1347 and 1350, when they mentioned the possibility for the Tatars to conquer the fort of Cembalo, the Genoese of Caffa informed the doge of Genoa that, if this attempt would succeed, they would lose control over the sea and be unable to supply the city. The occupation of the fort of Cembalo allowed the Genoese to control the Western shore of the Crimea, as they controlled the Eastern shore of the peninsula from Caffa. When the Golden Horde, determined to exploit the rivalry between the Genoese and the Venetians, granted the later the right to settle in the ports of Provato, Calitra and Soldaia (Sudak) on the Eastern shore of the Crimea, the first did not tarry in taking the necessary countermeasures to prevent the development of any significant trade centres in the vicinity of Caffa. In 1365, given the anarchy that had engulfed the Golden Horde during the reign of Khan Berdibek (1357–1359), the Genoese occupied Soldaia (Sudak), where they installed a consul, thus removing the perspective of the permanent Venetian presence in this still prosperous settlement. Thereby, Soldaia (Sudak) became an annex of the Genoese trade system.

The Golden Horde did not accept these losses easily. But its repeated attempts to recuperate these lost positions—although successful at some point, under emir Mamai (1361–1380)—ended in a total defeat, i.e. with the total Genoese control of the Crimean shore. Three treaties concluded between the two powers—in 1380, 1381 and 1387—not only recognized the Genoese possession of the previously occupied positions, but also over a long strip of shore situated in-between—“the shore of Gothia (*riparia Gotie*) and the shore of Soldaia (*riparia Soldaie*)”—, including the settlements (*casali*) alongside it. Thus, the risk of the Tatars building hostile ports, under their control, was eliminated, as well as the perspective of a Venetian settlement in the peninsula.

The Genoese effort to control the Golden Horde's Black Sea shore was not limited to the Crimea. To the West, previous to 1381, the Genoese settled at the mouth of the Dnieper, where they dominated Lerici castle, an important strategic position and a station on the Caffa-Pera route. In 1386, there is mention of an embassy from the Genoese of Caffa that came at Moncastro to negotiate with the authorities of Moldavia. Since this event took place at a date

when Caffa was still at war with the Golden Horde, it means that Moncastro was no longer under Tatar rule and—perhaps—but had come under Genoese domination.

One of the most significant mutations in the Black Sea during the Venetian-Genoese war, caused by its antecedents and consequences, was the beginning of the Genoese domination at the Mouth of the Danube, substituting both the Byzantines and the Tatars. No later than 1359, the Genoese controlled the significant fortified centre of Licostomo, taken from the Byzantines as a consequence of the successive Byzantine-Genoese conflicts from the middle of the 14th century. The key to the lower course of the Danube and to the connection with Central Europe through this route—the military and commercial complex of Licostomo-Kilia—also came under Genoese domination.

As a result of the competition with Venice and of the wars resulting from it, as well as the hostilities with the Golden Horde, Genoa gained complete control over the most significant centres of the Black Sea shore, previously under the domination of the Golden Horde. This evolution and its consequences will strongly and lastingly influence the situation of the whole region between the Carpathians and the Danube, both from an economic and political point of view. Defeating the hostility of their numerous adversaries, the Genoese had accomplished at the middle of the 14th century—by military means—the program of commercial policy they had projected at the beginning of the same century. Trade generated a commercial policy, and this, in its turn, was the cause of vast armed conflicts, with deep political consequences.

Only Tana remained outside the control of the Genoese and was seen by them as a serious shortage, as it prevented them from exploiting this branch of the silk and spice trade as they pleased, i.e. for maximal profit. However, since the Genoese were not disposed to give up these advantages, they will look for other means to achieve their goal, i.e. to replace their rivals as the main commercial intermediary between the East and the West. The pursuit of this objective inaugurated a new direction for the Genoese policy in the Black Sea.

Ever since the war with the Venetians, the Genoese from the Black Sea had established relations with the Hungarian king Louis of Anjou (1342–1382), whose expeditions against the Tatars had brought the borders of his kingdom in the vicinity of the Lower Danube. In 1358, when the Genoese were already masters of Licostomo, the king of Hungary granted the inhabitants of Braşov—a city destined by its geographical position to be the main link between the Lower Danube, the Black Sea and Central Europe, through Transylvania and Hungary—an ample privilege, giving them the right to travel freely until the Mouth of the Danube. In the same year, the Hungarian king broke the Venetian

domination over the Dalmatian coast, offering the merchants of his country the possibility to engage in commercial operations in and through the Adriatic, a domain previously reserved for the Venetian Republic. Genoa and Hungary's common adversity towards Venice was at the origin of the alliance between the two powers, which planned to completely remove the Venetian Republic from the Black Sea and Mediterranean trade and to annihilate its traditional function as the main intermediary between East and West. Within the frame of this alliance, the Genoese inaugurated an important communication line from Licostomo-Kilia to Braşov and further on towards Central Europe, through Wallachia, which imposed its participation to the benefits of this trade route—that quickly became one of the main arteries of European trade—by force of arms. When, in 1368, the ruler of Wallachia, Vladislav-Vlaicu, opened this route by an ample privilege granted to the merchants of Braşov, the influx of merchants from Central Europe towards the Danube ports increased to such an extent that the king of Hungary—in order to protect the interests of the inhabitants of Braşov and probably at their request—granted the city “staple rights” (*jus stapuli*). According to these rights, the foreign merchants coming from Poland, Bohemia and other regions were compelled to bring their merchandises to Braşov, where the local tradesmen bought and transported them towards the sea. The commercial cooperation between Genoa and Hungary also extended towards the Adriatic. Louis of Anjou created favourable conditions on the Dalmatian shore both for the merchants from his kingdom and the Genoese, in order to ensure the supply of Oriental products for his dominions and, through them, for the Central-European space. This cooperation in the two seas was meant to complete the project of completely removing Venice from the Oriental trade and isolating it from the great routes of international trade. The success of this project would have meant death by asphyxiation—from a commercial point of view—of the great Venetian power. The commercial privileges granted to the Genoese merchants in Hungary, the presence of several Genoese admirals at the court of king Louis and the military cooperation of the two powers at the Lower Danube are the signs of their alliance that will—soon—manifest itself in a vast military action against Venice.

The commercial project anticipated the supply of Oriental products for Germany through Genoa, and for Austria, Hungary and Bohemia through the Danube route. Venice was to be cut off from the main routes of international trade that had previously ensured its prosperity and power.

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Venice retaliated. In 1376, it obtained from Byzantium the concession of the island of Tenedos that controls the crossing through the Dardanelles, threatening Genoese access in

the Black Sea. This was the main cause of the *Third War of the Straits/War of Chioggia* (1376–1381) during which Venice was on the brink of total defeat, being blockaded by the Genoese fleet and besieged on land by the Hungarian armies, being saved only by a great collective effort and the heroism of its sailors.

The role of the Black Sea in this vast conflict can be clearly seen in the light of the allies' action program, of the preliminary negotiations and of the peace treaty. According to a Venetian source, in 1376 the Genoese had obtained from the Byzantine emperor the commitment that he will prevent their rivals from "sailing to Tana". According to the same source, during their great victories against the Venetians, the Genoese would have tried to force their adversaries to give up their autonomous commercial activity in the Black Sea altogether and only trade "in the places they [the Genoese] possessed in that sea" or, in other words, *ad loca januensium*.<sup>30</sup> The achievement of this goal would have brought the Black Sea back to the regime imposed by the Genoese at Nymphaion and even more than that, given the evolution of the situation in Byzantium and in the Black Sea in general. In 1381, at the conclusion of the Treaty of Turin, Genoa was forced to settle again with a short-term withdrawal of the Venetians from Tana. Generally, the problems of the Veneto-Genoese rivalry in the Black Sea were unchanged compared to the pre-war situation, but the Genoese maintained their hegemony in the region.

The opening of a new trade route, connecting the Black Sea and Central Europe through Moldavia and Poland, considerably increased the area of action of the Genoese in the region.

For the remainder of the 14th century and in the first half of the next one, the Genoese continued to consolidate their hegemony by conquering or building several fortifications along the shoreline, an activity which impressed the locals to such an extent that they attributed until late all the ruins of such castles or forts in the region to the Genoese. Considering the naval forces maintained by Pera and Caffa and—to a lesser extent—by its other settlements, Genoa's capacity of sending its squadrons in the Black Sea in case of need was the best guarantee for the stability of the system that the Genoese had imposed on the Black Sea trade.

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30 *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Acta Extera* III, ed. Gusztav Wenzel, (Budapest, 1876), p. 243; Șerban Papacostea, "De la guerre du Bosphore à la guerre de Ténédos. Rivalités commerciales et alignements politiques dans le sud-est de l'Europe dans la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle," in Papacostea, *La Mer Noire carrefour des grandes routes intercontinentales*, (Bucarest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006), p. 190.

## 6 The Stabilization of the Equilibrium: the End of the Genoese Hegemony in the Black Sea (1381–1453)<sup>31</sup>

The peace of 1381, that maintained the right of the Venetians to come back to Tana, maintained the previous equilibrium between the two Italian trade republics in the Black Sea and—alongside it—the main source of their rivalry: Venice remained an autonomous agent in the Black Sea, especially in the Northern part, at Tana, and Genoa, waiting for a favourable occasion to restart its maximal project, consolidated its previously gained positions.

The year 1387 marked a triple success for the Genoese. In Crimea, the Tatars permanently gave up control on the shore of the peninsula following a solemn treaty. South from the Mouth of the Danube, Ivanko, son and ear of the despot Dobrotitsa, granted them an ample commercial privilege according to their terms, after a long conflict.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, in these conditions, during or after the war, the Genoese captured the important fortress of Kaliakra;<sup>33</sup> with this place, the whole North-western shore of the Black Sea, from the Crimea until South of the Mouth of the Danube, that was previously under the domination of the Golden Horde, entered under the commercial control of the Genoese, according to the program conceived seven decades before. Also in 1387, sultan Murād I (1362–1389) closed the Ottoman-Genoese conflict generated by the Hungarian-Genoese alliance and re-established the good relations with Genoa established by his father in 1352.<sup>34</sup>

Both in the North-Western and in the Southern and Eastern parts of the Black Sea, the Genoese rigorously defended their prerogative to dictate the rules of commercial activity in according to their own interests.<sup>35</sup> Their position of strength, built with responsibility and a sense of continuity since the

31 Aldo Agosto, "Due lettere inedite sugli eventi nel Cembalo e di Sorcati in Crimea nel 1434", *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 91 (1977), pp. 509–517; Șerban Papacostea, "Une révolte antigénoise en Mer Noire et la riposte de Gênes (1433–1434)", *Il Mar Nero*, 1 (1994), pp. 279–290; Ștefan Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre (Genovezi, români și tătari în spațiul pontic în sec. XIV–XVII)*, (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 2001), pp. 117–151.

32 Ivan Biliarsky, "Le traité entre le despote Jean Terter et les Génois du 27 mai 1387", *Commentationes historiae iuris helveticae*, 7 (2011), pp. 1–22.

33 Șerban Papacostea, "Genovezii la Caliacra: un document ignorat," *Pontica*, 30 (1997), pp. 277–283.

34 Kate Fleet, "The Treaty of 1387 between Murād I and the Genoese," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 56 (1993), pp. 13–33.

35 For Caffa's role in the first decades of the 15th century see Enrico Basso, "Gli atti di Giovanni di Labaino (1410–1412): note su una fonte inedita per la storia di Caffa e del Mar Nero," in *Mare et Litora. Essays presented to Sergei Karpov for his 60th Birthday*, ed. Rustam Shukurov, (Moscow, 2009), pp. 501–516.

beginning of their activity in the Black Sea, was undoubtedly the main cause for the hostility of the locals; they were, however, powerless as long as they didn't have the support of an equal naval power, which—in the given conditions—could have been only Venice.

A significant—but hard to evaluate—decrease for trade on the route through the Golden Horde was Tamerlane's assault of 1395 against the main trade centres of the route linking the Black Sea with Central Asia and the Far East—Urgench, Sarai, Tana—in order to render this route unusable and promote the commercial road crossing his own territories. The profitability of the trade route from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean also decreased due to the unrests from the Persian Ilkhanate and its successor states. The attempts undertaken during the following decades by those interested in reactivating the commercial activity on the routes of the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate confirm this decline, but also the maintenance of Eurasian trade on the itineraries opened during the 13th century. The Genoese from the Black Sea found a compensation for this loss in the great development of the continental routes through Wallachia and Moldavia, opened with their decisive contribution. Although trade with Central Europe had its special conditions in and through the two Romanian countries, the Genoese from the Black Sea were still the main suppliers of Oriental products. Neither the conquest of the Licostomo fort by Moldavia in the first decade of the 15th century did end the commercial role of the Genoese at the Mouth of the Danube.

The Genoese hegemony faced one of its toughest challenges between 1433 and 1434, when it countered a general rebellion of the other Black Sea powers, sustained by the Venetian diplomacy and navy. At the end of February 1433, the Greeks of Cembalo—at the suggestion of the prince of Mangup and encouraged by the Crimean Tatars—occupied the Genoese fort. Caffa called on the metropolis, asking for a swift intervention since, otherwise, as the city's authorities states, "our other places" would have been in danger. A valid apprehension, since the loss of Cembalo triggered a general anti-Genoese movement in the Black Sea. Shortly after this event, the Genoese in Pera and Trebizond had to face the hostility of their "hosts", Byzantium and Trebizond, whom were determined to recuperate at least a part of their traditional incomes that their guests had taken over. The Genoese in Cetatea Albă (Moncastro, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy) were also in danger of losing their traditional privileges due to a hostile initiative of the Moldavian authorities, who asked the Venetian bailo in Constantinople to open a trade route in this direction, a clear clue that up to this date the Genoese monopoly functioned at the mouth of the Dniester. Caffa itself, the cornerstone of the whole Genoese trade system in the Northern Black Sea, was in danger of losing its commercial hegemony;

even worse, its very existence was threatened by the attack unleashed by the Crimean Tatars, who considered it the right time to recuperate their former commercial and territorial positions, taken over by the Genoese. Venice was behind all this, being at war during these years with the Duchy of Milan, the sovereign of Genoa at that time. Therefore, an extraordinary conglomerate of hostile forces threatened at that time to tear apart the whole hegemonic system organised and consolidated by Genoa for almost two centuries. A massive naval intervention from the metropolis was the only way of saving this system.

In March 1434, a large Genoese squadron sailed towards the Black Sea and headed for the fort of Cembalo, which it reconquered at the beginning of June. This rapid success restored Genoa's prestige in the Black Sea, even if its next military operation, the attempt of an expeditionary force to conquer Solkhat, the centre of Tatar power in the Crimea, ended up in defeat. Although the Genoese naval expedition didn't manage to complete the mission it was entrusted, the main elements of the Genoese hegemony were saved. A significant indication for this return to the *status quo ante* was the cancellation of the Venetian initiative to install a vice-consul in Moncastro, a centre that remained under the commercial control of the Genoese. The system was saved from its inner adversaries, but will succumb in the following decades under the blows of the rapidly expanding Ottoman power.

During the clashes with their Black Sea adversaries and Venice, the Genoese enjoyed the saving military support of the Ottoman Turks. The Genoese payed their duty ten years later, during the crusade of Varna, when they provided the necessary naval means for sultan Murād II (1421–1451) to transport the bulk of his forces—blocked in Asia Minor—to Europe. However, the sultan's victory was the prelude of the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmet II, in 1453 that annihilated the existential condition of the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea, i.e. the free connection with the metropolis through the Straits. Reduced to its own forces, the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea suffered a series of amputations. The conquest of Caffa in 1475 by the new masters of the Straits put an end to the Genoese chapter in the history of the Black Sea.

In conclusion, the Genoese domination was unchallenged in the Black Sea due to the exceptional regime imposed to the Byzantine Empire by the Treaty of Nymphaion, in March 1261 that allowed Genoa to remove all the other significant competitors from the region. Until the end of the 13th century, the Genoese exploited the commercial—regional and intercontinental—resources of the Black Sea trade in an unbridled, individualistic and anarchic manner. The Treaty of Nymphaion remained the ideal frame for the Genoese in the Black Sea.

The perspective of a Venetian comeback in the Black Sea, according to a clause from the Treaty of Milan of 1299, introduced an extremely dangerous competitive factor and an unavoidable stimulus for the other regional powers that determined Genoa to reorganize the rules of its Black Sea trade. A central body—established for this purpose—decided the fortification of the main centres of Genoese trade in the Black Sea. The first measures in this direction were consolidated during the 14th century and the following ones by the creation of a network of Genoese fortified settlements all across the sea shore. Thus, the Genoese hegemony had considerably enhanced its military dimension.

The effective comeback of the Venetians as an autonomous commercial factor was the cause of the Genoese attempts to eliminate them, especially from the Northern Black Sea and most of all from Tana, an extremely sensitive point on the route towards inner Asia and the sources of Oriental products. The conflict with the Golden Horde that tried to assault Caffa in 1343, and the failure in removing the Venetians from Tana by force of arms in 1350–1355 inaugurated the chapter of direct control over the North-Western Black Sea, after the occupation of the main strategic and commercial centres. In the second half of the 14th century, installed at the Mouth of the Danube and the Dniester Liman, the Genoese opened two great trade routes towards Central Europe, through Wallachia and Moldavia. Genoa's alliance with Hungary, that had recuperated the Dalmatian shore under the rule of king Louis of Anjou, was at the origin of a vast commercial and military cooperation, aimed at removing Venice from the great routes of international trade. The failure of this new attempt to solve the complicated problem of the Venetian presence in Tana in collaboration with Hungary forced Genoa to find a long-term adaptation to this situation. In these conditions, the Genoese maintained hegemony over the Black Sea trade for as long as the metropolis managed to maintain the naval connections with its settlements in the Black Sea and to protect them with its naval power in case of need. The establishment of Ottoman domination in the Straits ended this vital link and—along with it—the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea.

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Professor Şerban Papacostea passed away without being able to revise the present text. We decided to publish it as a humble homage to a scholar who had an important contribution to the development of the studies of medieval Black Sea.



# Catholic Missions in the Golden Horde Territory

*Roman Hautala*

The creation of the Mongol Empire in the first half of the 13th century allowed the Mendicant orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans to launch unprecedented missionary activity outside Europe and to cover the whole of Asia with a network of their convents, including such previously inaccessible regions as northern China and southern India. The Mendicant friars (influenced particularly by Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Order of Friars Minor) started preaching the gospel in the East simultaneously with the beginning of Mongol expansion in the West,<sup>1</sup> and they regarded their orders as spiritual brotherhoods sanctioned by heaven for the salvation of mankind on the eve of the Apocalypse, the imminence of which was indicated by rumors of the terrible destruction caused by the Mongol offensive in the East.<sup>2</sup> The approach of the Second Coming of Christ clearly suggested the need to intensify preaching among the “infidels” for the realization of evangelical prophecy—“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come,”<sup>3</sup>—so the Mendicants

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1 On the attempt of Francis of Assisi to preach to the Egyptian sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in August 1219 during the Fifth Crusade, see James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), pp. 158–59; Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra santa e dell'Oriente francescano*. Vol. 1: *Il secolo decimoterzo (1215–1300)* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1906), 17, p. 94.

2 See the relevant comment on this in the “Book of Pilgrimage” (1300) of the Dominican missionary Riccoldo da Montecroce, who contrasted the creative activities of the Dominicans and Franciscans with the destructiveness of the Mongols, in Riccoldo de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient. Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre*, ed. René Kappler (Paris: Honoré Champion éditeur, 1997), p. 94.

3 Matthew 24:14. See also Felicitas Schmieder, “Cum hora undecima: The Incorporation of Asia into the Orbis Christianus,” in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2000), p. 260. This phrase from the Gospel of Matthew remained relevant for missionaries throughout the centuries. For example, the Spanish Franciscan, Paschal of Vitoria, cited this quotation in his letter written in Almaliq (in modern Xinjiang) in 1338 as the main justification for his preaching activity in Central Asia; see *Analecta Franciscana: sive chronica aliaque varia documenta ad historiam fratrum minorum spectantia*. Tomus 111: *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Minorum cum pluribus appendicibus inter quas excellit hucusque ineditus Liber de laudibus S. Francisci fr. Bernardi a Bessa edita a patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1897), pp. 534–35. See also Emmett Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages* (Lexington, 1975), p. 77.

made a number of efforts to induce the inhabitants of the East to spiritual conversion on the eve of the coming upheaval.<sup>4</sup>

The Roman popes, who shared the eschatological expectations of the Mendicant friars, endowed them with bulls, which were intended to grant safe-conduct to the missionaries during their movement in the East and simultaneously reflect the degree of importance with which the Holy See invested the development of Catholic missionary work in Asia. Indeed, in the most standard bull of this type, beginning with the words *Cum hora (jam) undecima* (“since it is the eleventh hour”), the pontiffs likened the missionaries to the vineyard workers of the “eleventh hour” in the Gospel of Matthew (20:1–16), sent to “many peoples, nations, languages and kings” (Revelation 10:11) since the salvation of “Israel,” according to Paul the Apostle, would remain impossible without the “fullness of the Gentiles” entering the Church (Romans 11:25). In these bulls, the popes clearly defined to whom the friars were to preach the gospel by directing them to “the tribes that do not know the Lord Jesus Christ,” and to “the sons who drew back and do not obey the holy Roman Church” (that is, the Eastern Christians), as well as to the Catholic Christians who found themselves in the East and whose doubting souls should be reaffirmed and strengthened by “the light of sermons.”<sup>5</sup>

4 Schmieder, “Cum hora undecima,” p. 260; Daniel, *Franciscan Concept*, pp. 12, 22, 25, 37.

5 I limit my references to those bulls *Cum hora undecima*, which the popes issued with some variations from 1235 to 1321:

- a) the bull of Gregory IX addressed to the Dominican Guglielmo di Monferrato and his companions on 15 February 1235, in *Fontes. Series III. Volumen III: Acta Honorii III (1216–1227) et Gregorii IX (1227–1241) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus collegerunt notisque adornarunt*, ed. Aloysius L. Täutu (Romae: Typis pontificae universitatis gregorianae, 1950), pp. 286–87;
- b) Gregory IX’s next bull, dated to 11 June 1239, where the list of the eastern peoples to which the missionaries were being sent appears for the first time, in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum. Vol. 1: Ab Honorio III ad Innocentium VIII*, ed. Giovanni Giacinto Sbaraglia (Romae: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1759), pp. 269–70;
- c) the bull of Innocent IV of 21/22 March 1245 containing detailed clarification of the tasks and powers of missionaries, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, 1, 360–61. See also James Muldoon. *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1979), p. 37;
- d) his next bull, dated to 23 July 1253, in which the “Tartars” are first mentioned among the peoples to which the Dominicans were being sent, in *Bullarium Ordinis FF. Praedicatorum. Vol. 1: Ab Anno 1215 ad 1280*, ed. Thomas Ripoll and Antonin Brémond (Romae: typis & sumtibus H. Mainardus, 1729), pp. 237–38;
- e) a similar bull of Alexander IV, dated to 19 April 1258, addressed to the Franciscans, in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum. Vol. 11: Referens ea, quae Alexandri et Urbani VIII. sunt*, ed. Giovanni Giacinto Sbaraglia (Romae: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1761), pp. 285–86;

The popes granted the friars numerous powers to increase the effectiveness of missionary activities in the East, conferring on them the status of legates of the Holy See. The pontiffs, calling upon them “to declare the word of God in the lands that still do not aspire to the teachings of the Apostolic See,” allowed the missionaries to commune with those excommunicated from the Roman church “with the word, service and sacramental bread” and to bestow upon them “the grace of absolution;” to bring them to a flock “of the sons of the Church” and to promote them to the order of acolyte;<sup>6</sup> to confirm the priests of the Eastern Christians in their old dignity and to grant dispensation for their canonical irregularities; to allow inhabitants of the East (who converted to Christianity or accepted union with the Roman Church) to remain married, even if such marriages held a degree of kinship prohibited in Europe; to absolve the murderers of clergymen and monks (*sic!*); to found churches<sup>7</sup> and to sanctify again those that had been desecrated; to serve the masses in these churches and provide appropriate indulgences to all the local inhabitants who attended them and granted material resources for the maintenance of Catholic churches; and to bless sacred garments, veils of altars and corporals—that is, to fulfill in this case the functions of bishops.

Basically, these powers served the purpose of streamlining the relations of missionaries with Eastern Christians and especially with their clergy and prelates who displayed an obvious desire to get closer to the Western Christians, something which was driven by Mongol expansion. Indeed, the prior of the Dominicans in the Holy Land, Philip, who listed the missionary successes of his Order of Preachers in the Middle East in 1237, reported how the monophysite patriarch, Ignatius II, accepted union with the Roman church a year

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f) two subsequent bulls of Nicholas IV from 3 September 1288 and 13 August 1291, in *Fontes*. Series III. Volumen v. Tomus II: *Acta Romanorum pontificum ab Innocentio V ad Benedictum XI (1276–1304)*, ed. Ferdinand M. Delorme and Aloysius L. Tăutu (Romae: Typis pontificae universitatis gregorianae, 1954), pp. 142–44, 184–85;

g) the bull of Clement V from 23 July, 1307, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, pp. 35–37;

h) and the bull of John XXII of 23 October 1321, fully reproducing the text of the latter bull, in *Fontes*. Series III. Volumen VII. Tomus II: *Acta Ioannis XXII (1317–1334) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus collegerunt notisque adornarunt*, ed. Aloysius L. Tăutu (Romae: Typis pontificae universitatis gregorianae, 1966), pp. 94–98.

6 In this case, the popes clearly reserved the right to ordain new priests for the Catholic bishops; see Athanasius Matanić, “Bulla missionaria ‘Cum hora jam undecima’ ejusque juridicum ‘Directorium apparatus’,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 50 (1957), p. 371.

7 This permission ceased to be in effect in those eastern regions where Catholic dioceses were later founded, becoming the exclusive prerogative of the local bishop. In their letter of 1323, the Franciscans of Crimea, who were under the authority of the bishop of Caffa, clearly indicated this. See Arthur Christopher Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum Fr. Minorum Tartarie Aquilonaris an. 1323,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 16, no. 1–2 (1923), p. 112.

earlier. He explained this significant achievement of the Dominicans as being related to the lands and peoples canonically subordinated to the patriarch having been, for the most part, devastated by the “Tatars.”<sup>8</sup> Also in his letter to the Georgian queen of 13 January, 1240, Pope Gregory IX pointed out that Queen Rusudan was ready to accept the union in exchange for military support against the Mongols, and the pontiff (who rejected her request) used the occasion to send the friars preachers to Georgia to found their convent of the Holy Sepulcher in Tiflis.<sup>9</sup>

Political reasons contributed to the development of the apostolate of the Mendicants in the Middle East and later the Catholic missionaries achieved even more tangible successes when the Mongols in that region sought to conclude a military alliance with Western Europe against the Muslim rulers of Syria and Egypt. Starting with the letters of the leader of the Transcaucasian Mongols Eljigidei in 1248<sup>10</sup> and the Ilkhanate’s founder, Hulagu, in 1262,<sup>11</sup> both addressed to France’s Louis IX, the Mongol rulers of Iran persistently sent diplomatic embassies to Europe with the aim of concluding a military alliance, and the fact that the Mendicants acted as mediators in these negotiations contributed to their parallel missionary activities in the Middle East.<sup>12</sup>

While the development of the apostolate in the Ilkhanate already has been discussed in a significant number of publications,<sup>13</sup> this article examines the details of missionary activities in the Golden Horde, which has received much less attention in the research literature. However, before going on to describe

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- 8 See the copy of Philip’s letter in *Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora*. Vol. III: A.D. 1216 to A.D. 1239, ed. Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman Publishing, 1876), pp. 397–98. See *ibidem* about the successful negotiations of friar Guglielmo di Monferrato (the recipient of the first bull *Cum hora undecima*) with the Nestorian catholicos Sabriso v. See also Juliane Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinopels: Dominikanische Erzählungen im diachronen Vergleich* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011), p. 52.
- 9 *Bullarium Ordinis FF. Praedicatorum*, I, 108–109. See also Jean Richard, *La Papauté et les missions d’Orient au Moyen Age (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. 2<sup>ème</sup> éd (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1998), p. 55.
- 10 Paul Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la Papauté,” *Revue de l’Orient chrétien*, 8/28 (1931–32), pp. 23–26.
- 11 Paul Meyvaert, “An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France,” *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 11, no. 1 (1980), pp. 252–59.
- 12 See a brief but informative overview of these negotiations, as well as missionary activities in the Ilkhanate, in Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, pp. 98–116.
- 13 For the sake of brevity, I do not refer here to the numerous studies devoted to the relations of the Latin world with the Ilkhanate, which are abundantly cited both in the above-mentioned work of Jean Richard and in a separate chapter of Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 165–95.

the development of the apostolate in the Golden Horde, and attempting to explain the reasons for the successes of the Mendicants on its territory, it should be noted here that the activities of Western missionaries in the steppes of the northern Black Sea and the Lower Volga became possible only after the establishment of Mongol rule in these regions. Previous preaching efforts of the Hungarian Dominicans among local nomads, crowned by the founding of the Cuman diocese in 1227,<sup>14</sup> were confined to the southern territories of modern Moldova and the only attempt by the friars preachers to move farther into the steppe resulted in the death or capture of these Dominicans.<sup>15</sup> The activities of Western missionaries and their significant successes became possible only with the establishment of centralized power among the descendants of Jochi, the first son of Chinggis Khan, which provided the necessary protection to the Mendicants, as will be shown below.

## 1 The Development of the Apostolate in the Golden Horde

Approaching the topic of the development of Catholic missionary work in the Golden Horde, it should first be noted that we do not have clear information about when and where Western missionaries first settled on its territory and began regular preaching activities. Apparently, the first attempt to carry out missionary activity on a permanent basis was undertaken by the five French Dominicans whom William of Rubruck met on 2 February 1255, in the Great Armenian town of Ani, on his way back from Mongolia to Palestine. These Dominicans were supplied with Pope Innocent IV's letters of recommendation, one of which was addressed to Prince Sartaq (d. 1256), the first-born of the

14 See the earliest mention of this diocese in the bull of pope Gregory IX addressed to Robert the archbishop of Esztergom on 21 March 1228, in *Fontes*, III, p. 208.

15 See the mention by a certain Peter or Svipert of Porroch of the martyrdom of two Dominicans on the banks of the Dnieper, c. 1223–24, transmitted by Gérard de Frachet in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum historica*. Vol. 1: *Fratris Gerardi de Fracheto O.P. Vitae Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum: necnon Cronica Ordinis ab anno MCCIII usque ad MCCLIV*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert (Lovanii: Typis E. Charpentier & J. Schoonjans, 1896), p. 306. It should be noted that the famous account by Friar Richardus of the discovery of "Great Hungary" and the related journey of the Dominican Julian to the territory of modern Bashkortostan in 1234–35 does not mention attempts to preach the gospel among the Kipchaks or Alans that Julian and his companions met on their way; see Heinrich Dörrie, *Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen: Die Missionsreisen des fr. Julianus O.P. ins Uralgebiet (1234/5) und nach Russland (1237): und der Bericht des Erzbischofs Peter über die Tartaren* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 151–61.

Golden Horde's ruler, Batu.<sup>16</sup> Friar William told the Dominicans about his rather unsuccessful experience of preaching the gospel both in Batu's dominion and in Mongolia. After that, the Dominicans went to Tiflis to consult with their brethren from the local convent about a further course of action, and William added that he did not know what they did subsequently.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps they went to the Lower Volga region, but they could not find Sartaq there since he went to Mongolia in July 1254.<sup>18</sup> Apparently, this mission did not bring any results, even though the Dominicans were able to enter the territory of the Golden Horde.<sup>19</sup>

Catholic missionaries (this time, Franciscans) were able to settle in the Golden Horde probably only in the reign of Mengu-Timur Khan (1267–82). The *yarlik* (literally “privilege”) of Uzbek Khan (1313–41), granted to Franciscans in his domain in 1314, serves as an indirect confirmation, since Uzbek claimed that he granted it to the Franciscans “in accordance with the same content” found in the previous *yarliks* issued by Mengu-Timur<sup>20</sup> and Toqta

16 See the text of Innocent IV's letter *Gratias et laudes*, addressed to Sartaq, in Karl-Ernst Lupprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1981), pp. 209–12.

17 Guglielmo di Rubruk. *Viaggio in Mongolia (Itinerarium)*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Torino: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2011), pp. 310–12. See also Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 257; Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, p. 78; Giovanni Soranzo, *Il Papato, l'Europa cristiana e i Tartari* (Milano: Vita e pensiero, Pubblicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1930), pp. 163–64.

18 Pelliot, “Mongols et la Papauté,” p. 79.

19 Perhaps a little later, the Dominicans gained favor with the ruler of the Golden Horde, Berke (1257–66), and received permission to preach the union with the Roman church among local Christians, as indicated by the letter *Et si extra* of Pope Alexander IV, addressed to Berke between 1257 and 1260, which recommended an unnamed friar and his companions as “angels of salvation;” see Lupprian, *Beziehungen der Päpste*, pp. 213–15.

20 Uzbek calls his “progenitor” Mengu-Timur by his nickname, “Culuc,” meaning “glorified” in the interpretation of Paul Pelliot, *Notes sur l'histoire de la Horde d'or: suivies de quelques noms turcs d'hommes et de peuples finissant en “ar”* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Adrien Maisonneuve, 1949), pp. 58–60. For Ötemish Hajji's claim in his work of the middle of the 16th century (“Chinggis-nama” or “Qara tawarikh”) that Mengu-Timur received the nickname “Koluk” for his kindness, see Ötemish Hajji, *Chinggis-nama*, ed. Veniamin Yudin (Alma-Ata: Gylym, 1992), p. 101; Ötemish Hajji, *Qara tawarikh*, ed. Il'nur Mirgaleev et al. (Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh.Mardzhani AN RT, 2017), p. 39. Probably, an anonymous author of the second half of the 16th century had in mind the same thing when he claimed in his “Shajarat al-atrak” (“Genealogy of the Turks”) that Mengu-Timur was nicknamed “Kelek Khan,” being “an intelligent, fair and magnanimous ruler;” see Vladimir Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov, odnosjashhihsja k istorii Zolotoj Ordy*. Tom II: *Izvlechenija iz persidskih sochinenij*, ed. Aleksandr Romaskevich and Semen Volin (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1941), p. 205.

(1291–1312).<sup>21</sup> It is possible that Mengu-Timur's yarlik to the Franciscans was granted at the beginning of his reign, related closely to that which he issued to the metropolitan of Kiev, Kirill, endowing him with a number of privileges (similar to those granted to the Franciscans) and exemption from several taxes in his yarlik of 1 August 1267.<sup>22</sup> However, this proposed dating of Mengu-Timur's yarlik remains only a hypothesis and he could have granted it to the Franciscans at any point during his reign—that is, between 1267 and 1282.

The exact dating of the beginning of the Franciscan apostolate in the Golden Horde represented a difficulty for the medieval chroniclers of the Order of the Friars Minor as well. In particular, the Franciscan Giovanni Elemosina suggested in his “Chronicle or Book of Numerous Stories” (1336) that the “planted church of the faithful began to grow in Northern Tartary” after Mengu-Timur's envoys to Pope Gregory X returned “jubilant” to the Golden Horde, having been baptized at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the embassy in Lyons was sent by the Ilkhanate's ruler, Abaga (1265–82), with the aim of concluding a military alliance between Western Europe and the Ilkhanate against the Mamluks based in Egypt and Syria.<sup>24</sup>

21 This yarlik is preserved in the Latin translation contained in the codex D. li. 3.7 in the library of the university of Cambridge (fol. 148<sup>v</sup>–149<sup>r</sup>). See the edition of this translation in Arthur Christopher Moule, “Textus trium novorum documentorum e Tartaria Aquilonari an. 1314–1322,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 17 (1924), p. 65.

22 See the text of this yarlik of Mengu-Timur in Russian translation in Vasilij Grigor'ev, *O dostovernosti jarlykov, dannyh hanami Zolotoj Ordy russkomu duhovenstvu. Istoriko-filologicheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow: Universitetskaja tipografija, 1842), pp. 124–26 (the “lengthy” edition of the 1540s); *Pamjatniki russkogo prava. Vypusk 3: Pamjatniki prava perioda obrazovanija russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva XIV–XV vv.*, ed. Lev Cherepnin (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo juridicheskoi literatury, 1955), 467–68 (the initial izvod of the middle of the 15th century). See also the considerations regarding the dating of the yarlik of Mengu-Timur granted to the Franciscans in: Roman Hautala, “Jarlyk Uzbeka franciskancam Zolotoj Ordy 1314 goda: latinskij tekst, russkij perevod i kommentarii,” *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie = Golden Horde Review*, 3 (2014), pp. 33–34.

23 Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra santa e dell'Oriente francescano*. Vol. 11: *Addenda al sec. XIII e fonti pel sec. XIV* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1913), p. 125.

24 See the related letter *Excellentiae tuae litteras* addressed by Pope Gregory X to the Ilkhan Abaga on 13 March 1275, in Lupprian, *Beziehungen der Päpste*, pp. 231–32. See also Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks. The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 100; Jean Richard, “Chrétien et Mongols au Concile: La Papauté et les Mongols de Perse dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *1274, année charnière: mutations et continuités: [actes du colloque international] Lyon–Paris, 30 septembre–5 octobre 1974*, ed. Michel M. Mollat (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1977), p. 37; Antonio Franchi, *Il Concilio II di Lione (1274) secondo la Ordinatio Concilii Generalis Lugdunensis* (Roma: Edizioni francescane, 1965), p. 84.

Perhaps the arrival of the Mongols in Lyons and the baptism of three of them on the occasion of the council<sup>25</sup> aroused increased enthusiasm for the eastern apostolate in Franciscan circles and the leadership of the Order of the Friars Minor could well have sent special missions of the Franciscans eastward to preach the gospel among the “Tatars” of the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Mariano da Firenze asserted in his “Compendium of the Chronicles of the Friars Minor” (c. 1552) that during his term of office, that is, between 1279 and 1285, the Franciscan general minister Bonagratia da Bologna sent “many brothers to the northern parts of the infidels and diligently expanded the Northern Vicariate;”<sup>27</sup> which presupposes the permanent presence of the Franciscans in the Golden Horde even before the dispatch of these missions.

Be that as it may, all the evidence mentioned above is circumstantial in nature. Only the letter of Friar Ladislaus, the custodian of Gazaria (that is, the head of the Franciscans in the northern Black Sea region), contains the first clear evidence of permanent missionary activity of the Franciscans in the territory of the Golden Horde.<sup>28</sup> Friar Ladislaus wrote the letter in Caffa on

25 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, pp. 419–20. With the exception of the two Dominicans, the remaining 11 envoys of Abaga Khan were probably already converted to one of the Eastern Christian confessions.

26 In this regard, the letter of pope Nicholas III of 7 October 1278 addressed to Philip, bishop of Firmano and the legate of the Apostolic See in Hungary, deserves a separate mention; see *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum*. Vol. III: *A Clemente VIII ad Honorium VIII*, ed. Giovanni Giacinto Sbaraglia (Romae: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1765), pp. 347–48; see also Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, pp. 88, 141. In this letter, the pontiff mentioned certain successes of the Hungarian Franciscans in their preaching among the “Tatars” neighboring with Hungary and probably nomadizing in the territory of modern Moldova. The pope wrote that he received this encouraging news from the minister of the Franciscan province of Hungary and instructed Philip to use income from the Hungarian churches “payable to the Apostolic See” to restore the diocese of Milkov, which had functioned in Moldavian territory before the appearance of the Mongols in Eastern Europe at which point it was destroyed by them in 1241. However, in this case, it seems that the activity of the Hungarian Franciscans was limited only to the modern territory of Moldova and did not affect the internal regions of the Golden Horde. It is also likely that Philip could not fulfill the order of the pope, since more than half a century later, Pope John XXI pointed out, in his bull of 4 October 1332, that the diocese of Milkov had never been restored; see *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*. Vol. I: *1199–1345*, ed. Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki and N. Densușianu (Bucharest, 1887), p. 622; *Bullarium Franciscanum*, III, 348, nota d.

27 Marianus de Florentia, “Compendium Chronicarum Fratrum Minorum (continuatio),” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 2, no. 4 (1909), p. 465. That is, the territorial-canonical division of the Order of the Friars Minor, which corresponded to the Franciscan province and theoretically covered the entire territory of the Golden Horde.

28 This letter was published by Albert Starzer and Oswald Redlich, *Eine Wiener Briefsammlung zur Geschichte des Deutschen Reiches und der österreichischen Länder in*



11 April 1287<sup>29</sup> and addressed it to Friar Laurentius, the envoy of the Crimean minorities, sent to Matteo d'Aquasparta who was elected general minister of their Order the following month.<sup>30</sup> In his letter, Friar Ladislaus described events that took place in Solkhat (the future capital of the Crimea) in summer 1286. According to Ladislaus, the local Muslim population of Solkhat tore the bell from the Franciscan church, apparently irritated by its ringing. After that, the Minorites appealed to the two main rulers of the Golden Horde, namely the “emperors Tula-Buga and Nogai.”<sup>31</sup> For their part, Tula-Buga and Nogai took the side of the missionaries and each of them sent to Solkhat “one of their most outstanding barons” to identify the offenders of the Franciscans. In turn, a third “special ambassador” of the Golden Horde rulers was to enforce the sentence and he entered Solkhat with military force on 4 August 1286. After the expulsion from Solkhat of the main oppressors of the Minorites, the Golden Horde ambassador ordered three bells to be hung on the Franciscan church instead of one previously torn off by Muslims. In the end, the Franciscan offenders were forced to compensate them for the damage and pay an even larger sum to “the empress, Iaylak, the chief and most powerful wife of Nogai,” who arrived in Solkhat after the representatives of the Golden Horde authorities.

In addition to describing these events, Friar Ladislaus indicated the scale of the Franciscan apostolate in the Golden Horde. According to Ladislaus, by the time of the events described, the Franciscans already had one convent

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*der zweiten Hälfte des XIII. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: In Commission bei F. Tempsky, 1894), pp. 248–50. Subsequently, Conrad Eubel published an independent text edition in *Bullarii Franciscani epitome, sive summa bullarum in ejusdem bullarii quattuor prioribus tomis relatarum*, ed. Konrad Eubel (Apud Claras Aquas: Coll. S. Bonaventurae, 1908), 165, nota 1. In turn, Girolamo Golubovich used Eubel's edition, probably without checking the original text in the codex Ottoboni 2115 (fol. 629) of the Vatican library; Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 11, pp. 444–45.

29 “Written in Caffa on Friday before the Sunday of the Easter Octave, in the year of the Lord 1287.” It is unclear why Konrad Eubel, and Girolamo Golubovich who followed him, dated the compilation of this letter on 10 April. In fact, the Easter Octave in 1287 fell on 13 April and, thus, Ladislaus wrote his letter on Friday, 11 April.

30 Szilvia Kovács, “The Franciscans and Yaylaq Khatun,” *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia*, 13 (2016), p. 50, nota 20; Thomas Tanase, “Le ‘khan’ Nogai et la géopolitique de la mer Noire en 1287 à travers un document missionnaire: la lettre de Ladislas, custode de Gazarie,” *Annuario dell'Istituto romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica di Venezia*, 6–7 (2004–2005), p. 295.

31 This notice is of paramount importance for studying the history of the Golden Horde for two reasons. First, Friar Ladislaus clarified that by the summer of 1286, Tula-Buga (d. 1291) had already displaced the former khan, Tuda-Mengu (1282–86), and subsequently become khan of the Golden Horde. Secondly, at least from the point of view of the Franciscans, Nogai (d. 1300) was called here “emperor,” on a par with Tula-Buga and thus was perceived as his co-ruler, if not an independent ruler of a part of the Golden Horde, west of the Dnieper.

both in Caffa and Sarai and one church in Solkhat, and this means that the Franciscans had to carrying out missionary activity long before 1286. For her part, Iaylak, evidently sympathetic to the Franciscans, expressed a desire to accept Catholic baptism at their hands and allowed the Minorites to establish the Church of the Holy Virgin in Qırq Yer, another Crimean city. In addition, the Franciscans managed to baptize the Tatar governor of distant Vicina (allegedly in the Danube delta) named Argun “with all his subordinates,” an act which took place in the Franciscan church which, judging by the words of Ladislaus, already existed there by this time.

The baptism of Nogai’s wife apparently reflected certain sympathies for Catholicism among some representatives of the Golden Horde ruling elite. Probably after the conversion of the “empress” Iaylak, the Franciscans achieved an even more significant success by baptizing “one great king of the Tatars.” Thus “secured by his benevolence,” according to the Franciscan Giovanni Elemosina, the Friars Minor “built 10 sites in that Tartary:<sup>32</sup> five permanent walled sites in Tatar cities<sup>33</sup> and five mobile sites in pavilions or tents among the multitude of the Tatars<sup>34</sup> who graze and raise almost countless herds on the vast pastures.”<sup>35</sup> Apparently, this same “king of the Tatars” was mentioned in the anonymous Franciscan list of “the children of the emperors<sup>36</sup> who were baptized by the Friars Minor,”<sup>37</sup> in which he is called “Coktoganus” and that

32 Unfortunately, he does not specify their location within the Golden Horde.

33 Both full-fledged convents and more modest residences in Golden Horde cities could be what is intended by “sites” in Franciscan sources.

34 In his “Chronicle,” Giovanni Elemosina explained that he meant by mobile residences the mobile altars that the Franciscans carried on wagons following the ever nomadizing “Tatars;” see Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, p. 125; see also Jean Richard, “The Missions to the North of the Black Sea (Thirteenth to Fifteenth centuries),” in *The Spiritual Expansion of Medieval Latin Christendom: The Asia Missions*, ed. James D. Ryan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 352.

35 See “Book of Histories of the Holy Roman Church” (1335) by Giovanni Elemosina, as well as his “Chronicle” (1336), in Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, pp. 107, 120.

36 The Golden Horde’s Mengü-Timur and the Ilkhanate’s Arghun (1284–91) were referred to here as the “emperors.”

37 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, p. 73. This list is contained in the codex Nero A. IX (fol. 101<sup>r</sup>) from the British library and mentions a number of other rulers and prelates in the Golden Horde and the Middle East baptized by the Minorites, including the Ilkhanid prince, Öljaitü (d. 1316), in 1291; see the related letter *Exultat cor nostrum* of Pope Nicholas IV addressed on 20 August 1291 to Öljaitü, who took the name of Nicholas at baptism, in *Annales ecclesiastici Caesaris Baronii*. Vol. XXIII: 1286–1312, ed. Odoricus Raynaldus et al. (Barri-Ducis: Ex typis consociationis Sancti Pauli), 1871, p. 100. Girolamo Golubovich dated this list by its mention of the last achievement of the Franciscans, namely, the acceptance of union with the Roman Church by the Armenian archbishop Zacharias (whose residence was in the monastery of St Thaddeus, next to modern Maku, in the extreme

three of his sons were baptized with him, “Georgius, Curamas and Abusca,” of whom only the last remained alive by the time the list was compiled.<sup>38</sup> It is also quite possible that several other Franciscan sources had in mind precisely this Mongol prince in their reports that he was buried in the Franciscan convent of St John, located three miles from Sarai.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the relatively numerous references to the Mongol prince<sup>40</sup> in Franciscan sources, his identification raises certain difficulties. This identification, however, can be greatly facilitated by comparing the aforementioned list of “the children of the emperors who were baptized by the Friars Minor” (contained in the codex Nero A. IX from the British library) with the “Shuab-i panjganah” by Rashid al-Din (the genealogical supplement to his “Jami at-tawarikh,” compiled c. 1306). While an anonymous Franciscan reported that the names of the sons of “Coktoganus” were “Georgius, Curamas and Abusca,” Rashid al-Din, in turn, mentioned the following names of the sons of the Kutukan, the Chinggisid prince: Kurmas corresponding to Curamas, Kunkiz or

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northwest of modern Iran). Golubovich believed that the union with this Armenian prelate took place in 1329; see the related bull of Pope John XXII addressed to Zacharias on 11 September 1329, in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum*. Vol. v: *Benedicti XI, Clementis V, Ioannis XXII monumenta*, ed. Konrad Eubel (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1898), 404. However, as Paul Pelliot later pointed out, the same pontiff addressed a bull with a similar content to Zacharias on 21 November 1321 (*Annales ecclesiastici Caesaris Baronii*. Vol. XXIV: 1313–1333, ed. Odoricus Raynaldus et al. (Barri-Ducis: L. Guerin, 1880), pp. 142–43), and Zacharias accepted the union eight years earlier; see Paul Pelliot, “Zacharie de Saint-Thaddée et Zacharie Séfédinian,” *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, 126 (1943), pp. 151–52. Thus, this list was likely compiled around 1321.

38 “Abusca” was alive in 1323 as well, and he was in the circle of Uzbek Khan, judging by the 1323 letter of Caffa’s Franciscans; see Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum,” p. 111.

39 See the “Chronicle of the 24 Generals of the Order of the Friars Minor” by an anonymous Aquitanian author (perhaps Arnaud de Sarrant, minister of the Franciscan province of Aquitaine; see Amanda Power, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20), in *Analecta Franciscana*, III, p. 456; a record “On the holy brothers resting in the Northern Vicariate” from the codex Canon. Misc. 525 of the Bodleian library, in *Fragmenta Minora. Catalogus Sanctorum Fratrum Minorum, quem scriptum circa 1335 edidit notisque illustravit fr. Leonardus Lemmens O.F.M.* (Romae: typis Sallustianis, 1903), 46; and the treatise “On the Conformity of the Life of St Francis to the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ” by Bartolomeo Pisano, in *Analecta Franciscana: sive chronica aliaque varia documenta ad historiam fratrum minorum spectantia*. Tomus IV: *De conformitate vitae Beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu auctore fr. Bartholomaeo de Pisa*, Liber I, Fructus I–XII (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1906), p. 557.

40 Of course, it is possible to assume that these sources reported on different representatives of the Golden Horde elite. However, besides the exception of the fragment from the codex Nero A. IX, each of the above-mentioned sources discusses only one high-ranking Chinggisid baptized by the Franciscans, which makes it possible to assume that all refer to the same person.

Kurkiz—the Turkic and Mongolian equivalent of George, and Abšeke, that is, Abušqa which obviously corresponds to the Latin form of “Abusca.”<sup>41</sup> The correlation between these two completely independent sources suggest that both speak about the same Chinggisid, namely, Kutukan—the son of Mengu-Timur Khan and younger brother of Toqta Khan.

Apparently, Kutukan was baptized after 1287, since the custodian Ladislaus did not mention him in his letter dated 11 April 1287. It is equally obvious that Kutukan was baptized before 1291; that is, before he was executed by Toqta as a consequence of the conspiracy that brought the latter to power.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the death of their high-ranking protector, the Franciscans apparently did not encounter any obstacles to their preaching activity immediately after the Toqta’s ascension. Nevertheless, the next information about any progress in their missionary activities in the Golden Horde dates to the beginning of the 14th century.<sup>43</sup> In particular, Giovanni Elemosina informs us in his “Chronicle”

41 Devin A. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde. Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 98, n. 65; Chulpan Khamidova, “Rashid ad-din. Shuab-i pandzhgana. 2. Mongoly i tjurki (2),” *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie = Golden Horde Review*, 4, no. 4 (2016), p. 873. Probably the first two of them participated later in the struggle for power that broke out in the Golden Horde after the death of Toqta Khan in August 1312, and according to the letter of the Franciscans of Caffa in 1323, they were executed by the new khan of the Golden Horde, Uzbek, although for unclear reasons the Franciscan authors of this letter passed them off as the sons of the late Toqta Khan; Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum,” p. 111. Abušqa, in turn, stayed away from the power struggle and, according to the same letter of the Franciscans, Uzbek Khan treated him kindly. Probably, Pope John XXII addressed two bulls in 1321 and 1322 to him specifically, calling him “Abuscanus, the son of the cherished in memory Cotoganus, the king in the regions of Tartary;” see *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, 214; *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, p. 186.

42 Vladimir Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov, odnosjashihhsja k istorii Zolotoj Ordj*. Tom 1: *Iz vlechenija iz sochinenij arabskih* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografija Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, 1884), p. 108 (Baybars al-Mansuri), p. 157 (an-Nuwayri). It remains unclear why Kutukan was buried in the Franciscan convent of St John near Sarai only at a time when the Franciscan order was headed by Gonsalvus Hispanus, that is, between 1304 and 1313, as indicated by the record “On the holy brothers resting in the Northern Vicariate” from the codex Canon. Misc. 525 of the Bodleian library (see *Fragmenta Minora*, 46), and the treatise “On the Conformity of the Life of St Francis” by Bartolomeo Pisano (see *Analecta Franciscana*, iv, p. 557). It is possible, however, that he was exhumed from his original grave and reburied in the said convent. In any case, these same sources indicate that the exhumation of Kutukan was an acceptable act since he was ultimately reburied in Sarai 30 or 35 years after his burial in the convent of St John.

43 In this period of time, however, one should not neglect the involvement of the Dominicans in the “Tartar” apostolate after Friar Franco da Perugia had arrived in Caffa as legate of Pope Boniface VIII and, along with friars, had founded there the first Dominican convent in the Golden Horde in 1299; see Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, “Les Missions dominicaines

about the arrival in Caffa (c. 1307) of a group of missionaries “who brought with them books, altar bowls and corporals,”<sup>44</sup> having taken advantage of a short period of peace throughout the Mongol Empire<sup>45</sup> to come to the aid of the Latin archbishop of Khanbaliq (the capital of the Yuan state), Giovanni da Montecorvino.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, the arriving Franciscans were forced to stop at Caffa because of the eruption of an unexpected conflict in the Golden Horde.

However great the successes of Catholic missionaries had been till this time, they had to suspend their activities in the Golden Horde because of a conflict that suddenly arose between Toqta Khan and the Genoese. In 1307, Toqta “ordered to capture all the Genoese throughout his empire,” and in November of the same year he sent his son Ilbasar at the head of the troops to besiege Caffa in Crimea. The Genoese together with the local Greeks defended the city for eight months, but on 20 May 1308 they were forced to burn and abandon it.<sup>47</sup> Without going into an explanation of the causes of this conflict,<sup>48</sup> it should

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en Orient au quatorzième siècle et la Société des frères pèlerins,” *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, 2 (1932), p. 16. Perhaps this convent was founded a little earlier; see Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, p. 130.

44 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, p. 132.

45 That began in 1304 in connection with the parallel pacification between the Chaghadaid khan Du’a (d. 1307), the Ögedeid Chapar (1303–10) (both were co-rulers in the territory of the Chaghadaid ulus in Central Asia) and the Yuan emperor Temür (1294–1307), as well as between the Golden Horde’s khan Toqta and ilkhan Ölǰaitü (1304–16); see Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997), pp. 71–72.

46 According to Giovanni Elemosina, the Franciscans rushed to the aid of the Khanbaliq’s archbishop in response to one of his letters, addressed to them in 1305 and 1306 in which he urged them to travel from the Golden Horde to China by the land route, which previously “had not been safe for a long time on account of wars;” see Anastasius van den Wyngaert. *Sinica Franciscana*. Vol. 1: *Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1929), pp. 349, 351–52. See also Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, p. 147.

47 Vincenzo Promis, “Continuazione della Cronaca di Jacopo da Varagine,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 10 (1874), pp. 500–501.

48 According to the continuator of the chronicle by Jacopo da Varagine, the conflict began “because of the arrogance that the Genoese had repeatedly expressed in the Toqta’s Empire” (see Promis, “Continuazione della Cronaca di Jacopo da Varagine,” 500), which seems to be an attempt to find at least some explanation for the motivations of the khan which were apparently unknown to the anonymous Genoese chronicler. According to the Mamluk authors, Baybars al-Mansuri and an-Nuwayri, Toqta took revenge on the “Genoese Franks” for the fact that they “captured the Tartar children” and sold them as slaves to Egypt; see Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov*, I, pp. 120, 162. In this case, however, Toqta’s concern for his nomadic subjects seems to be just an excuse for expelling the Italian merchants, since the Genoese continuously sold Kipchak boys to Egypt throughout the entire reign of Toqta (that is, from 1291), as well as during those of his predecessors

be noted here that the Franciscan convents in the Golden Horde were probably abandoned due to reprisals against Genoese merchants, which affected all the local Catholic residents. When Western missionaries began their activities anew, their success clearly depended on the favor of the new khan.

The letter of the general master of the Dominicans, Bérenger de Landore, addressed on 20 October 1312 to Franco da Perugia, the vicar of the “friars pilgrims among the nations,” indicates the possible presence of the Dominicans in Caffa already in the same year.<sup>49</sup> The Franciscans had to reappear there at about the same time. Then, on 20 March 1314 the new khan, Uzbek, granted them a yarlik with a number of exemptions: the Minorites received complete freedom of movement in the Golden Horde in order to preach the “Christian law” to the locals, they were exempted from military service as well as taxes and duties, and they were allowed to build their church (of St Agnes) in Caffa and ring its bell.<sup>50</sup>

The activities of the Franciscans during this period of the revival of the Catholic apostolate in the Golden Horde were directly related to the name of their head, Jerome of Catalonia, whom Pope Clement V ordained as bishop without residence “in the Tartar domain,” operating in formal submission to Khanbaliq’s archbishop Giovanni da Montecorvino, on 19 February 1311.<sup>51</sup> Obviously, the Avignon pope gave Jerome complete freedom to decide in which metropolis in the East to establish his cathedra and, as Girolamo Golubovich pointed out,<sup>52</sup> we do not have specific information about where Jerome went first and what he did for the next five years. However, one can assume with some certainty that he either arrived in Caffa immediately after his appointment or after a relatively short period of time.<sup>53</sup> In any case, the next time his

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and successors. The hypothesis of Virgil Ciociltan (for which it is difficult to find direct confirmation in the sources), recently presented by Marie Favereau as well, seems more meaningful: Toqta wanted to interrupt the slave trade to punish the Egyptian sultan for his reluctance to start joint military operations against the Ilkhanate; see Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, trans. Samuel P. Willcocks (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 170–71; Marie Favereau, “Zolotaja Orda i Mamljuki,” in *Zolotaja Orda v mirovoj istorii*, ed. Rafael Khakimov et al. (Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh.Mardzhani AN RT, 2016), p. 343.

49 *Litterae encyclicae magistrorum generalium Ordinis praedicatorum ab anno 1233 usque ad annum 1376*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert (Roma: ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1900), pp. 317–18.

50 Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 65.

51 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 74.

52 Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra santa e dell'Oriente francescano*. Vol. 111: *Dal 1300 al 1322* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1919), p. 40.

53 Uzbek Khan probably granted the aforementioned yarlik of 1314 precisely to Jerome and his subordinate Franciscans with the permission to administer “the people of the Christian law;” see Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 65. See also Soranzo, *Papato*, p. 476.

name is mentioned is in 1316 as the head of the Franciscans of Caffa: one of the early orders of the Office of Gazaria (a special Genoese body created in 1313 and granted exclusive rights to deal with issues related to trade in the Black Sea) mentions the presence in the town “of the church and convent of the Friars Minor of Caffa on a piece of land where, as it is said, friar Jerome had built previously a certain house in the form of church, and where he lives.”<sup>54</sup> Apparently, Jerome bore the title of “bishop of Caffa” already by this time, and on 20 March 1317 he certified in Pera the bull *Cum hora undecima* of Pope Clement V precisely under this title.<sup>55</sup>

For his part, Pope John XXII called Jerome the bishop of Caffa in one of his bulls on 6 February 1318<sup>56</sup> and addressed him in another bull on 28 March of the same year, in which the pontiff pointed out that “the diocese of Caffa was recognized as newly created for spreading the faith in the dominion of the Tatars, in the regions of the north,” that is, in the Golden Horde.<sup>57</sup> This latter bull, however, reflected the rather limited presence of Catholics in Caffa; according to the pontiff, the number of “pagans and schismatics” in the diocese of Caffa still significantly exceeded the number of “adherents of the Christian Church.” In connection with the statement of this fact, the pope mentioned Jerome’s concern about the widespread practice of mixed marriages between Catholics and “schismatics and other enemies of faith” and, yielding to the requests of the bishop of Caffa, John XXII granted marriage permission to those local Catholics who were related to each other by a fourth degree of kinship. The decision of the pontiff was a clear exception to the ordinary rules that prevented the marriage of Catholics with a similar degree of kinship in Europe. However, the need to protect Catholics from the “pernicious” influence of alternative religions or confessions obviously justified such an extreme measure.

Despite a number of orders made in 1316 by the Office of Gazaria in Genoa,<sup>58</sup> this renewed Genoese colonization of Caffa unfolded at a relatively slow pace and achieved notable success only around 1321, as evinced by the next letter of John XXII. In his bull addressed to Jerome on 26 February 1322, the pope stated that “the city of Caffa, at one time a village situated within the limits

54 *Monumenta historiae Patriae edita iussu regis Caroli Alberti*. Vol. 11: *Leges*, Tom. 1 (Torino: Augustae Taurinorum Reg. Typograph., 1838), p. 407. See *ibidem* for the mention of a “walled” piece of land which belonged to the Dominicans in Caffa.

55 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, 111, p. 40. Judging by his future activities, Jerome was constantly traveling between Avignon, Constantinople and Caffa.

56 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 143.

57 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 148.

58 In particular, the eight “wise men” of this Office obliged the Genoese to construct residential buildings on the plots of land that they bought inside Caffa; see *Monumenta historiae Patriae*, p. 409.

of the Khanbaliq's diocese, has now become an outstanding place, which is replete with a variety of people and things." Therefore, John XXII made the decision to erect Caffa "to the rank of [diocesan] city and adorn it with the city's name, assigning to it a diocese [extending] from the village of Varna in Bulgaria to Saray, defining it in length, and from the Black Sea to the land of the Ruthenians in width." In this bull, the pope clarified that earlier Jerome had been ordained bishop "without specifying any church" (that is, he was not assigned any church as a cathedral) but that only from this moment was he being appointed head of the cathedral church of St Agnes in Caffa with clearly defined limits on its territorial jurisdiction.<sup>59</sup>

Probably, the subordination of the whole territory of the Golden Horde to the Jerome's canonical jurisdiction was not only a statement on the growth of the diocesan metropolis of Caffa, but also a recognition of the achievements of local Franciscans. They reported in their letter of 1323<sup>60</sup> on an earlier conversion to the Christian faith of "more than a hundred princes, barons, and chiliarchs, and their families, and a countless multitude of children."<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the Franciscans reported with regret that "because of the small number of friars" they had to leave 22 of their sites (something which probably took place during the reprisals of Toqta Khan in 1307–1308), but they had two convents in Caffa and one in Cherson, as well as sites "in some other cities."<sup>62</sup>

59 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, pp. 142–43. Konrad Eubel believed that John XXII issued this bull under the date preceding the bull of 6 February 1318, in which the pope called Jerome the bishop of Caffa for the first time; see *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 143, note 6. However, the use of "bishop of Caffa" did not necessarily mean that his diocese was approved in the strictly defined limits of its canonical competence as early as 1318. In any case, the later bull was clearly dated to "the fourth calends of March of the sixth year" of the pontificate of John XXII, which corresponded to 26 February 1322; see Thomas Tănase, "Frère Jérôme de Catalogne, premier évêque de Caffa, et l'Orient franciscain," in *Espaces et Réseaux en Méditerranée VI<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Vol. 11: *La formation des réseaux*, ed. Damien Coulon et al. (Saint-Denis: Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2010), p. 11, nota 30.

60 It would be more accurate to say that this refers to two letters of the Franciscans of Caffa preserved in one codex in the library of the university of Cambridge (D li. 3. 7, fol. 146<sup>v</sup>–148<sup>r</sup>). However, the copyist of both letters cut off the end of the first letter and placed the second letter without a gap immediately after the first, as if they formed a single letter. Therefore, both letters must be dated by the date indicated at the end of the second letter, that is, 15 May 1323; see Michael Bihl, "De duabus epistolis fratrum minorum Tartariae aquilonaris an. 1323," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 16, no. 1–2 (1923), pp. 89–92; Moule, "Textus duarum epistolarum," p. 112.

61 Moule, "Textus duarum epistolarum," p. 106 (Latin text); Arthur Christopher Moule, "Fourteenth Century Missionary Letters," *The East & the West: a quarterly review for the study of missionary problems*, 19 (1921), p. 360 (English translation).

62 Moule, "Textus duarum epistolarum," p. 111.



Judging by the list of “sites of the Friars Minor” from the codex Nero A. IX of the British library,<sup>63</sup> among these “other cities” in which the Friars Minor re-established their houses were: Vicina (in the Danube delta), Maurocastro (at the mouth of the Dniester), Cembalo (modern Balaklava), Karasu-Bazar (also in Crimea), Soldaia (modern Sudak), Tana (at the mouth of the Don), Majar (modern Budennovsk in Stavropol Krai), Sarai (as well as a separate convent of St John in three miles from Sarai), Ukek (next to modern Saratov) and, possibly, Bolgar.<sup>64</sup>

As can be seen from this description, the Franciscans founded their strongpoints in the main cities of the Golden Horde. The Friars Minor, however, did not confine themselves to preaching the gospel exclusively among the local urban populations, but also made regular “exits” to the steppe for carrying out proselytizing activity among nomads. Indeed, the Hungarian Minorite, Iohanca, indicated in his letter addressed in 1320 to the head of the Order of the Friars Minor, Michele da Cesena, a significant missionary successes of his brethren among the nomads of the Golden Horde.<sup>65</sup> Three years later, the Franciscans of Caffa reported in their letter to the leadership of their Order that “a certain German brother snatched 93 idols<sup>66</sup> of the pagans from their hands, and baptized all the families and taught them as fully as was possible in the faith.”<sup>67</sup> Giovanni Elemosina, for his part, argued that the Franciscans enjoyed increased popularity among that segment of the local nomads who apparently had already professed (Nestorian or other forms of Eastern) Christianity before the arrival of missionaries, since the Minorites regularly sanctified their weddings in particular and other rituals, which were extremely important for local communities.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps the assertion of the Franciscans of Caffa that thanks

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63 According to Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, this description was compiled by a local Dominican between 1304 and 1318; see Loenertz, “Missions dominicaines en Orient,” pp. 74–75. However, a mention on the same handwritten folio (100<sup>v</sup>) of the martyrdom of three Franciscans in Erzincan, which took place on 15 March 1314 (see Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, III, p. 183), suggests that this description of the Franciscan strongpoints was compiled after 1314.

64 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, p. 72. The Dominicans, in turn, had two convents in Caffa and Tana.

65 Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 66.

66 Meaning *ongons*, anthropomorphic figures of felt or metal representing, for nomadic people, their ancestors.

67 Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum,” p. 107 (Latin text); Idem, “Fourteenth Century Missionary Letters,” p. 361 (English translation).

68 See respectively his “Book of Histories” and “Chronicle,” in Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, pp. 107, 125. Apparently, the increased demand for Franciscan priests was due to the shortage of their own Christian clergy among those nomads who professed Christianity.

to their missionary activity almost a third of the Golden Horde “received the light of our faith kindly and was daily receiving it”<sup>69</sup> seems a deliberate exaggeration.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, the scale of missionary activity of the Franciscans appeared to be quite impressive and affected even such remote regions of the Golden Horde as “Bascardia,” that is, the territory of modern Bashkortostan.<sup>71</sup>

Dominicans Francesco da Camerino and Richard the English made a feasible contribution to the further development of the apostolate in the Golden Horde: in 1332, under their influence, the ruler of Vospro (modern Kerch) named “Millenus” and “Versacht” a “king” of the Zichs (who inhabited the northeastern coast of the Black Sea) accepted union with the Roman Church. Both Dominicans personally informed Pope John XXII about this achievement and brought to Avignon the letter of the king of the Zichs as is evidenced by the answer of the pontiff addressed to “Versacht” on 2 July 1333.<sup>72</sup> John XXII highly appreciated this success of the preachers among the “adherents of the Greek schism” and decided to establish a new Latin archdiocese with the cathedral church of the Archangel Michael in Vospro, headed by Francesco da Camerino.<sup>73</sup> All the Black Sea dioceses of Trebizond, Savastopol (modern Sukhumi), Caffa and Pera, as well as the new diocese of Cherson in Crimea, were subordinated to the new archdiocese.<sup>74</sup> John XXII commissioned the administration of the last of these dioceses to Richard the English with an appeal to expand the preaching of the union with the Roman Church among the local population of “Gothia” (on the southern tip of the Crimean peninsula) which professed Greek Orthodoxy.<sup>75</sup> The success of this preaching activity,

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69 Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum,” p. 107 (Latin text); Moule, “Fourteenth Century Missionary Letters,” p. 361 (English translation).

70 Much like the assurance of friar Iohanca that “in some regions” of the Golden Horde “the infidels remained a little more than half;” see Moule, “Textus trium,” 66.

71 Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 67. According to Friar Iohanca, the Franciscans also received an invitation to establish their residence in the “land of Sibur,” that is, today’s Tyumen region. However, the Minorites could not satisfy this request because of their small number; see Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 69.

72 *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, pp. 525–26.

73 See the bull of John XXII addressed to Francesco da Camerino on 1 August 1333, in *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, pp. 524–25.

74 See the related bull of the pope, dated 5 July 1333, in *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*. Vol. 1: *Ab Honorio PP. III. usque ad Clementem PP. VI, 1216–1352*, ed. Augustin Theiner (Romae: Typis vaticanis, 1859), pp. 348–49.

75 See the decree of John XXII on the founding of the diocese of Cherson on 5 July 1333, in *Vetera monumenta historica*, 347–48; as well as the bull of 5 August 1333, where Richard the English is called the head of this diocese, in *Vetera monumenta historica*, pp. 350–51.

however, turned out to be rather limited as it is not mentioned in the currently known sources.<sup>76</sup>

In turn, another bull of Pope John XXII of 28 March 1318 mentions the significant success of the Latin bishop of Caffa, Jerome of Catalonia, under whose influence the Armenian archbishop of Solkhat, Arakel, accepted union with the Roman church.<sup>77</sup> However, judging by the content of the bull addressed to him on 22 November 1321 by John XXII, three years later, he encountered sharp resistance from the Armenian bishop of Caffa—"the son of perdition by the name of Tadeos who separated from unity with the church."<sup>78</sup> According to the pope, Tadeos was ordained bishop by "his Catholicos," who apparently was the Armenian Catholicos Stepanos. Stepanos headed the Aghuan church (centered in the Gandzasar monastery in the modern de facto Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh) until 1323 and ordained another of his protégés in the Golden Horde, namely the Armenian archbishop of Sarai named Pogos.<sup>79</sup> Pogos also acted as a fierce opponent of the union with the Roman church and, according to the bull *Doctor gentium egregius* of Pope John XXII from 22 November 1321, he expelled Bishop Stepanos from Sarai. Stepanos, in turn, became apparently the protégé of the archbishop of Solkhat, Arakel.<sup>80</sup>

As can be seen, the papal policy aimed at concluding a union between the Roman and Eastern Churches caused a split among the Armenians of the Golden Horde. However, further negotiations of the eastern prelates with the local Franciscans and Dominicans led to the easing of this conflict. Already in 1322, under the influence of the local Dominicans, Tadeos joined their Order, perhaps after he had received a promise from the Latin bishop of Caffa, Jerome, that he could succeed to the cathedra after the said bishop's death. Thus, Tadeos accepted union with the Roman Church and, the same year, visited

76 The cathedras of Vospro and Cherson were abolished after the death of Francesco da Camerino and Richard the English; see Loenertz, "Missions dominicaines en Orient," p. 32.

77 *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, pp. 78–79.

78 *Fontes*, vii/2, p. 99.

79 In the colophon of the Armenian gospel rewritten in Sarai in 1319, and now stored in the depository of the Mekhitarist congregation in Vienna [HS 434, fol. 441<sup>r</sup>], Pogos is mentioned in connection with the prelacy of catholicos Stepanos, whose name precedes the name of the Cilician Catholicos Kostandin, which presupposed the primary dependence of the Armenian archdiocese of Sarai on the Aghuan Catholicos. See the Russian translation of this colophon in Tatevik Sargsjan, *Svod armjanskih pamjatnyh zapisej, odnosjashihsjja k Krymu i sopredel'nyh regionam (XIV–XV vv.)* (Simferopol: SONAT, 2010), p. 61.

80 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, 212. See also the other bull of John XXII under the same date and addressed to Sarai's Armenians, which contains a demand to recognize Stepanos as their legitimate bishop, in *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, p. 146.

the pope in Avignon along with Jerome. In 1328, he was rewarded with an appointment of bishop of Coricos in Cilicia and was able to return to Crimea in 1334, this time as the new Latin bishop of Caffa.<sup>81</sup> In turn, Pogos resisted a little longer, but probably accepted the union, judging by the bull of Pope John XXII, dated 11 September 1329 and addressed “to Paul, the beloved brother in Christ, bishop of the Armenians in Uzbek’s empire” with an expression of sincere joy in connection with his “reunification” with the Roman Church.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the “Armenian” apostolate of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the Golden Horde was even more successful than the “Greek” one.

As follows from all of the above, the Catholic missionaries in the Golden Horde achieved their greatest successes during the reign of Uzbek Khan and their activities continued to develop at a more moderate pace up to the Ottoman conquest of Caffa in 1475.<sup>83</sup> Without going into a detailed description of this further development,<sup>84</sup> we should pay attention here to the circumstances that contributed to missionary activities being carried out in the Golden Horde.

## 2 The Circumstances Contributing to the Missions’ Development

The aforementioned letter of the custodian Ladislaus in 1287 reflects the apparent dependence of Western missionaries in the Golden Horde on the

81 Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, p. 159; Jean Richard, “Deux évêques dominicains agents de l’Union arménienne au Moyen-Age,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 19 (1949), pp. 262–64; Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, “Deux évêques dominicains de Caffa. Frère Thaddée d’Arménie et Frère Matthieu Mani de Cortone,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 5 (1949), pp. 346–51.

82 *Fontes*, VII/2, p. 210; See also Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, p. 159, nota 133. Since the Armenian name of Pogos corresponds to Paul and in connection with the lack of information about other contemporary Armenian bishops in the Golden Horde with this name, it can be stated with relative certainty that this prelate was the same Pogos who expelled the pro-Latin Bishop Stepanos from Sarai eight years earlier.

83 The “Catalog of the Provinces of the Order of the Friars Minor” of 1334 does not mention the appearance of new residences of the Franciscans, except for Solkhat; see Konrad Eubel, *Provinciale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum vetustissimum secundum Codicem Vaticanum nr. 1960* (Quaracchi, Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1892), pp. 73–74. For his part, Bartolomeo Pisano noted, in his treatise “On the Conformity of the Life of St Francis” (written between 1385 and 1390), the appearance of new houses in Ylice (at the mouth of the Dnieper), Haji-Tarkhan (near modern Astrakhan), Ak-Saray (in the Volga delta) and Urgench, in addition to three other toponyms which are difficult to identify: Comuch, Tarchis and Mamucci; see *Analecta Franciscana*, IV, p. 557.

84 See the details of this development in Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, pp. 230–55, 273–78.

patronage of local Mongol rulers. The patronage of these rulers played a decisive role in the frequent conflicts between missionaries and Muslim residents of the Golden Horde cities,<sup>85</sup> but it was not necessarily the result of some special sympathy for Christianity. Indeed, the executor of the verdict against the oppressors of the Franciscans in Solkhat in August 1286 was, according to Ladislaus, a Muslim.<sup>86</sup> His reprisals against his co-religionists, therefore, were not associated with any personal preferences, but met the requirement of re-establishing the old order: the Mongol administration evidently sought to immediately suppress all kinds of interfaith conflicts in its dominions. The Golden Horde rulers' policy of confessional tolerance was noted by a number of missionary sources, and in particular the Franciscans of Caffa reported in their letter of 1323 that "the Tatars approve of constancy, though they are infidels, that all hold the religion which their parents last held ... For they tolerate all sects and faiths and religious men among them, so long as in secular things they act as they are bound to do by the custom of the country."<sup>87</sup>

As mentioned above, Catholic missionary work in the Golden Horde reached its greatest scale in the reign of Uzbek Khan, known for his Muslim sympathies. Despite personal inclinations, his conversion to Islam did not lead to any significant changes in the traditional policy of religious tolerance practiced in the dominion of Uzbek and his predecessors. In his attempts to restore traditionally friendly relations with the Mamluks of Egypt (after a significant deterioration of these relations in the last years of Toqta Khan's reign<sup>88</sup>), Uzbek Khan would allow himself to be presented as a fanatical neophyte ready to destroy all the adherents of alternative religions and beliefs. In such a way,

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85 The martyrdom of the Franciscan István of Várád, executed by the Muslims of Sarai on 22 April 1334, represents in this case an exception. Friar István converted to Islam in Sarai in an attempt to escape punishment from a local Franciscan guardian (that is, the head of the convent) named Heinrich the Bohemian for some transgression (according to Bartolomeo Pisano, for adultery; see *Analecta Franciscana*, IV, p. 333). However, he later repented and was executed by local Muslims after he had expressed to them his intention to return to his Order, adding a verbal defamation of the Muslim religion. The "ruler (amir) of Sarai," mentioned in the description of this martyrdom, chose not to interfere in this matter, considering it an internal affair of the local Muslim community. See the description of the martyrdom in *Analecta Franciscana*, III, pp. 515–24 (with the mentions of the "ruler of Sarai" on pp. 521, 522).

86 Albert Starzer and Oswald Redlich, *Eine Wiener Briefsammlung*, 248.

87 Moule, "Textus duarum epistolarum," p. 111 (Latin text); Idem, "Fourteenth Century Missionary Letters," p. 365 (English translation). See a similar statement in the letter of the Franciscan Iohanca in 1320, in Moule, "Textus trium," p. 66; as well as the approving assessment of religious tolerance throughout the Mongol Empire by Giovanni Elemosina in his "Book of the Histories" and the "Chronicle," in Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, pp. 107, 120.

88 Ciocîltan, *Mongols and the Black Sea Trade*, pp. 170–71; Favereau, "Zolotaja Orda," p. 343.

according to the Mamluk author an-Nuwayri, in March/April 1314, the solemn embassy of Uzbek Khan arrived at the court of Sultan al-Malik an-Nasir in Cairo with gifts and congratulations “on the spread of Islam from China to the most distant lands of the West,” as well as with the statement “that there had remained in Uzbek’s realm a party adhering to a religion other than Islam, but that the king had offered them the choice between entry into the religion of Islam, or war, and further that they had refused and had fought, and that he had attacked them and annihilated them, slaying or capturing them.”<sup>89</sup>

This assertion of Uzbek ambassadors, however, was a clear distortion of the real state of affairs in the Golden Horde—one which was allowed by diplomatic etiquette.<sup>90</sup> In the very same month when the ambassadors of Uzbek Khan assured the Mamluk sultan in Cairo of the complete triumph of Islam in the Golden Horde, Uzbek Khan himself granted to the Franciscans of Caffa the above-mentioned *yarlik*, not only exempting them from taxes and duties, but also granting them permission to freely preach the “Christian law” throughout his domain.<sup>91</sup> Apparently, the Franciscans immediately took advantage of this permission,<sup>92</sup> and the sources relating to their apostolate in the Golden Horde do not mention any obstacles to their activities created by the local administration.<sup>93</sup>

Catholic missionaries were able to resume their activities in the Golden Horde only with the permission of the khan and Uzbek did not deny them the necessary protection, judging from a number of appreciative letters from the Avignon popes, containing a regular appeal to adhere to this attitude in

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89 Devin A. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 111–12 (English translation); Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov*, 1, p. 163 (Russian translation).

90 See apparent doubts about the reliability of the words of Uzbek’s ambassadors, in Dmitrij Vasil’ev, *Islam v Zolotoj Orde. Istoriko-arheologicheskoe issledovanie* (Astrakhan: Izdatel’skij dom “Astrahanskij Kreml’,” 2007), p. 7; Devin A. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 94–95; Denis Sinor, “Some Latin Sources on the Khanate of Uzbek,” in *Essays on Uzbek History, Culture, and Language*, ed. Bakhtier Nazarov et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1993), p. 111.

91 Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 65.

92 Indeed, in his letter of 1320 Friar Iohanca wrote that he arrived in the distant “Bascardia” (in the territory of modern Bashkortostan) six years before writing; see Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 67.

93 Only the same Friar Iohanca claimed that he was imprisoned at the request of the Muslims after he had tried to prove that the Muslim religion was “frivolous and profane” in the course of the religious dispute organized at the court of the “ruler of Bascardia.” It is significant, however, that he escaped the death sentence required by local Muslims, owing to “Tartar judges” (*jarguchi*) who were appointed from Sarai and felt sympathetic towards Christianity; see Moule, “Textus trium,” p. 68.

the future as well.<sup>94</sup> The intercession of the pontiffs must have played an important role in the favorable attitude of Uzbek Khan to local Christians. In particular, in his letter *Laetanter et benigne*, addressed to Uzbek on 17 August 1340, Pope Benedict XII claimed that the Golden Horde's khan refused to persecute Christians after an attempt on his life (by setting fire to his palace in Sarai at night), remembering the previous "pleas and exhortations" of the pontiff, despite the fact that the guilt of three Christians was proved during the investigation.<sup>95</sup> This papal letter was the result of the only known embassy of Uzbek Khan to Avignon.<sup>96</sup> In addition to two Genoese nobles (Petrano dell'Orto and a certain Alberto), the Franciscan Elia from Hungary acted as a member of this embassy,<sup>97</sup> transmitting to the pope Uzbek's concern with the increased number of border conflicts between his subordinates and the subjects of the kings of Poland and Hungary.<sup>98</sup> The Golden Horde's khan evidently

94 See the related letters of Pope John XXII, on 28 March 1318, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 148; on 27 September 1323, in *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, pp. 202–203; on 1 October 1333, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 558; as well as the letters of pope Benedict XII on 13 June 1338, in *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum*. Vol. VI: *Benedicti XII, Clementis VI, Innocentii VI, Urbani V, Gregorii XI documenta*, ed. Konrad Eubel (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1902), p. 60; on 31 October 1338, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, 64; and on 17 August 1340, in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, pp. 77–78. However, with regard to the "question" about the ringing of Christian bells, Uzbek Khan predictably yielded to the demands of Muslims and forbade the Christians of Soldaia to ring their bells (although he apparently granted the right to do it in Caffa in the above-mentioned yarlik of 1314; see Moule, "Textus trium," p. 65), as indicated by the bulls of John XXII of 28 March 1318 and 27 September 1323; see *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v, p. 148; *Annales ecclesiastici*, xxiv, pp. 202–203. Ibn Battuta, who does not mention the ringing of Christian bells in Solkhat, indirectly indicates that this prohibition extended to the capital of Crimea. However, according to the Muslim traveler, the ringing of bells was allowed in Genoese Caffa despite the presence of Muslim residents there; see *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta, A.D. 1325–1354*, Vol. II, ed. Hamilton A.R. Gibb (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1962), pp. 470–72.

95 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, p. 78. Unfortunately, we have no other information besides the details contained in this letter.

96 In his letter of two years earlier (13 June 1338), Pope Benedict XII proposed to Uzbek to organize an exchange of embassies between the Golden Horde and Avignon on an ongoing basis; see *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, p. 60. However, Uzbek responded to this invitation only on emergency occasions.

97 Friar Elia was a close associate of Uzbek Khan's son and heir, Tinibek, as indicated in Pope Benedict XII's bull addressed to Elia on 31 October 1338, as well as his letter addressed to Tinibek on 17 August 1340; see *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, pp. 65, 79.

98 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, vi, p. 78. The khan's anxiety was caused by the expansionist policy of the Polish king, Casimir III the Great, who sought both to annex Galicia and that territory's annual tribute payment to Uzbek. On the incursions of Polish troops into Galicia in the first half of 1340, as well as about the subsequent punitive expedition of the Tatars

threatened to invade Poland and the pope assured Uzbek in his letter that he would do everything in his power to restrain the conflict and reimburse the khan for possible losses. The pope, however, tactfully kept silent on the fact that two weeks before the writing of this letter, he promulgated another bull addressed to Poland's Casimir the Great, notifying him of the preaching of the crusade in Poland, Hungary and Bohemia "against the aforementioned Tatars and any other infidels" who, according to the pontiff, wished or ventured to attack the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>99</sup> Be that as it may, this embassy represents an interesting case with Uzbek Khan resorting to the mediation of a Catholic missionary from his dominion in order to enter into diplomatic contact with the Avignon Papacy. The potential usefulness of Western missionaries in diplomatic relations with one of the most influential rulers of the Latin world was to motivate the khan to grant protection to them in his dominion.

The desire to attract Italian merchants, who brought significant income to the khan's treasury by paying custom duties and taxes from commercial transactions in the Golden Horde, probably served as a stronger basis for Uzbek's favoritism toward Catholic missionaries. Western traders, who regularly visited Uzbek's dominion and often became permanent residents of the Golden Horde cities, sought to establish Latin churches there and directly contributed to the development of Catholic missionary work in the Golden Horde. First, their contribution to this development was that they established an almost uninterrupted maritime connection between Europe and Crimea that allowed

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in Poland in early 1341, see: "Chronicle of Poles" by Jan from Czarnkow in *Monumenta Poloniae historica = Pomniki dziejowe Polski*, Tom 11, ed. August Bielowski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1961), pp. 621–22; chronicle by František from Prague in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum = Prameny dějin českých*, Vol. IV, ed. Josef Emler (Praha, Nákl. Nadání Františka Palackého, 1884), pp. 430–31; the "Book of Reliable Stories" by Johann von Viktring in *Iohannis abbatis Victoriensis Liber certarum historiarum*, Vol. 11, ed. Fedor Schneider (Hannoverae, Lipsiae: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1910), p. 218; the chronicle of the Leoben Anonym in *Scriptores rerum Austriacarum*, Vol. 1, ed. Hieronymus Pez (Lipsiae: Gleditsch, 1721), 958; and the letter of Pope Benedict XII addressed to the bishop of Cracow on 29 June 1341, in *Fontes*. Series III. Volumen VIII: *Acta Benedicti XII (1334–1342) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus collegerunt notisque adornarunt*, ed. Aloysius L. Täutu (Romae: Typis pontificae universitatis gregorianae, 1958), pp. 111–12. See also Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 210; Boris Cherkas, *Zahidni volodinnja Ulusu Dzhuchi: politichna istorija, teritorial'no-administrativnij ustrij, ekonomika, mista (XIII–XIV st.)* (Kyiv: Institut istorii Ukraïni, 2014), pp. 163–64; Miroslav Voloshhuk and Andrej Stasjuk, "Pro pohid palatina Villerma in Ruteniam u kvitni 1340 r.," *Visnik Prikarpats'kogo universitetu. Istorija* 17 (2010), pp. 47–48, 51–52; Feliks Shabul'do, *Zemli Jugo-Zapadnoj Rusi v sostave Velikogo knjazhestva Litovskogo* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987), p. 38; Vladimir Pashuto, *Obrazovanie litovskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1959), p. 391.

99 *Fontes*, VIII, pp. 102–105.



Western missionaries to reach the Golden Horde without much difficulty. In his letter of 1338, the Spanish Franciscan, Paschal of Vitoria, offers a most characteristic description of the journey from Spain to Sarai, first through Avignon to Venice, with an intermediate visit to St Francis Basilica in Assisi, and then by Venetian cargo ship to Pera. From there, he took a Genoese galley to Tana, from which the Spanish Minorite reached Sarai in the company of Greek merchants.<sup>100</sup> In their letter of 1323, the Franciscans of Caffa, too, encouraged their fellows in the West to get to Crimea in the company of Venetian merchants, taking the sea route instead of the “difficult and dangerous” way by land.<sup>101</sup> In 1339, the Franciscan Giovanni de’ Marignolli who headed the large embassy of Pope Benedict XII to the Yuan Empire’s Toghon Temür Khan (1333–70), chose the sea route as well, preferring to travel from Naples to Pera and further to Tana on Genoese ships.<sup>102</sup>

As Johannes von Hildesheim pointed out in his treatise, “On the Deeds and Acts of the Three Holy Kings” (after 1364), Italian traders not only brought missionaries to the “Tartar” territories,<sup>103</sup> but also “founded monasteries for them with the support of other traders and faithful” and generously provided the missionaries with everything they needed, depending on which order they preferred.<sup>104</sup> According to the obituaries of the Dominicans Franco da Perugia and Giacomo Ugolini, sent by Pope Boniface VIII to Crimea along with other friars preachers, in 1299 Franco and Giacomo received a piece of land in Caffa as a gift from the Genoese and probably with the same help they founded their convent there and built a church “to the great devotion of all Christian people.”<sup>105</sup> Undoubtedly owing to the same direct support of the Italian merchants, the Franciscans managed to cover almost the whole territory of the Golden Horde with a network of their convents. Thus, consideration of the aforementioned list of “the sites of the Friars Minor” from the codex Nero A. IX of the British library<sup>106</sup> clearly establishes that the Franciscans founded their strongpoints in the main cities of the Golden Horde constantly visited by Western traders.

100 *Analecta Franciscana*, III, p. 532.

101 Moule, “Textus duarum epistolarum,” pp. 110–11.

102 See his “Chronicle of the Bohemians” in Wyngaert. *Sinica Franciscana*, pp. 526–27.

103 Johannes von Hildesheim was attempting to describe in this treatise the situation in the Yuan Empire at the beginning of the 1340s, but he used information from the Golden Horde.

104 See the codex C 70 inf. (fol. 475<sup>v</sup>) of the 15th century from the Ambrosian library of Milan, as well as the edition of this treatise in Johannes Hildesheimensis, *The Three Kings of Cologne: An Early English Translation of the “Historia trium regum;” Two Parallel Texts*, ed. Carl Horstmann (London: Trübner, 1886), pp. 299–300.

105 Loenertz, “Missions dominicaines en Orient,” pp. 67–68.

106 Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, II, p. 72. See also Richard, *Papauté et les missions*, pp. 94–95.

Western merchants, like local neophytes, regularly participated in masses in Latin churches in the Golden Horde and apparently generously endowed the Friars Minor and Dominicans with alms.<sup>107</sup> According to Friar Iohanca as well as the Franciscans of Caffa, the amount provided was even enough to buy slave boys in Uzbek's domains and educate future priests of local origin.<sup>108</sup> The same Johannes von Hildesheim argued that the friars taught these boys Latin and "explained to them the books containing all the confusion of the Jews and heretics and their prejudices and errors." In his view, after going through this learning process, the boys became "excellent scholars, dear to the emperor and other kings and peoples."<sup>109</sup>

Perhaps the donations of Western merchants sometimes were aimed at more pragmatic goals, if one takes into account the requirement of the general master of the Dominicans, Bérenger de Landore, addressed on 20 October 1312 to the "friars pilgrims among the nations," that they cease "easily and unbridledly [absolving] from the sentence of excommunication" those merchants who were caught in a prohibited trade with the Mamluk Egypt.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the presence of "compliant" Catholic missionaries in the East could be beneficial for merchants to promote their commercial interests as well. More important, however, seems to be the desire of Italian merchants to participate in religious services that were held in Catholic churches by Catholic priests, who were the official representatives of the Holy See in the East. Owing to this, Western merchants could justifiably lay claim to their special status in the territory of the Golden Horde and to assert their primary dependence on the supreme pontiff, unlike other subjects of the local Mongol rulers. And the consequence of this was their desire to contribute both to the construction of Catholic churches and the dissemination of the Franciscans' and Dominicans' missionary activities in the East.

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107 In his bull *Gratias agimus gratiarum* addressed to prelates and friars of the Order of Preachers on 1 October 1329, Pope John XXII conferred on the Dominicans the authority to encourage such donors by the forgiveness of "a hundred days of repentance imposed upon them;" see *Bullarium Ordinis FF. Praedicatorum*. Vol. II: *Ab Anno 1281 ad 1430*, ed. Thomas Ripoll and Antonin Brémond (Romae: typis & sumtibus H. Mainardus, 1730), pp. 185–86.

108 Moule, "Textus trium," 67; Idem, "Textus duarum epistolarum," p. 109.

109 See the above-mentioned codex, C 70 inf. (fol. 475<sup>v</sup>–476<sup>r</sup>), from the Ambrosian library and the edition of this treatise in Johannes Hildesheimensis, *Three Kings of Cologne*, p. 300.

110 *Litterae encyclicae*, 314. Master Bérenger also accused the Dominicans in the East of using the money which they received from such merchants for their own purposes, probably meaning that the friars preachers allowed themselves to make investments in trading operations.

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# Between Byzantium, the Mongol Empire, Genoa and Moldavia: Trade Centers in the North-Western Black Sea Area

*Laurențiu Rădvan*

The North-Western part of the Black Sea has been an area of interest ever since Antiquity. Despite the scarcity of natural harbours, the mouths of large rivers flowing into the sea favoured the emergence of economic centres that played a more or less important part in politics, depending on how international relations evolved and how much the region appealed to various powers of the time. In classical Antiquity, the Greeks had founded colonies at the mouths of the Southern Bug (Olbia), Dniester (Tyras, Nikonion) and Danube (Istria). Some of the ancient sites were no longer inhabited during the Middle Ages, some were restored and proved to be viable until late modern times. Such is the case of Cetatea Albă at the mouth of the Dniester: a medieval settlement developed where the Greek colony of *Tyras* once stood. I will take Kilia as an example when considering new sites: it was developed close to where the Northern arm of the Danube flows into the sea, and it replaced Istria at the end of the southern arm, which was silted up.

The area north-west of the Black Sea witnessed a specific development in our period of interest, i.e. the 13th–15th centuries. Various political events have left their mark on this region, which served as a point of contact between several local powers. Over several decades between the 12th and 13th centuries, the area saw some radical changes. South of the Danube, and until 1185–1187, the main political, economic, cultural, and religious force was the Byzantium, which was expelled from the area after brothers Asen and Peter uprising.<sup>1</sup> North of the river, in some parts named Cumania, the kingdom of Hungary became more active in the first decades of the 13th century, and even founded a Catholic bishopric here, in 1227.<sup>2</sup> Cumania, Bulgaria and Hungary would be then ravaged by the great Mongol invasion. From this point on, any power wishing to take any kind of action near the Black Sea would have to negotiate with the Mongols.

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1 For the Second Bulgarian tsardom, see Alexandru Madgearu, *The Asanids. The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185–1280)*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016).

2 *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, series D, vol. I (Bucharest, 1977), 14, doc. 6 (from now on DRH).

In 11th–15th century sources, Cetatea Albă feature under several names, confusing researchers: *Mavrokastron*, *Maurocastrum*, *Moncastro* (“Cetatea Neagră” = Black Fortress) or *Asprokastron*, *Albicastrum*, *Belgorod* and *Akkerman* (“Cetatea Albă” = White Fortress).<sup>3</sup> Most Romanian historians believe Maurocastrum and Asprokastron are one and the same settlement,<sup>4</sup> although sources invite some questions. *Album Castrum* and *Maurum Castrum* are present in a list of Eastern Franciscan convents, but placed in different vicariates, the former in the Russian vicariate, and the latter in that of *Tartaria Aquilonaris*.<sup>5</sup> Research into 1400 lists shows that *Maurum Castrum* is last to come into the custody of the *Gazaria*, with other Genoese settlements in Crimea and north of the Black Sea, including Vicena-Ilice (mentioned before *Maurum Castrum*), probably the town of Vicina on the Danube, and the fortress of Ilice, at the Dnieper mouth.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand *Album Castrum* is present in a separate jurisdiction, along Lviv, Kolomyia, Kamieniec, Siret, Baia and Licostomo.<sup>7</sup> Kilia’s documents also had a 1360 text referring both to *Asperum Castrum*, and to *Maocastro*.<sup>8</sup> The well-known Polish chronicler Jan Długosz also notes that: “The Dniester has its mouths in the Great Sea south of Cetatea

3 This is one of those towns with names that baffles the readers. Even today, the town is called Cetatea Albă in Romanian, the official name being Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi. It became a part of the Soviet Union after the Second World War, and now belongs to Ukraine.

4 N. Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chilie și Cetății Albe* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1899), pp. 26–27; Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă* (Bucharest: Academiei, 1935), p. 107; Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 1997), pp. 208–209.

5 Jacob Bromberg, “Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies on Medieval Dobruđja, Bessarabia and Moldo-Wallachia” *Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines*, vol. XI/1 (1937): 164; vol. XII/1 (1938), pp. 54–55. Bromberg was among the few who supported the existence of two different fortresses/towns, based on the above mentioned list of Eastern Franciscan convents; his theory was not well received in the Romanian Academia (see Nicolae Bănescu, “Fantaisies et réalités historiques,” *Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines*, XII/1 (1938), pp. 73–90; Nicolae Bănescu, “Maurocastrum—Mo(n)castro—Cetatea-Albă,” *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 3rd series, vol. 22 (1939–1940), pp. 165–178). Bromberg’s confusion lies in the fact that, not knowledgeable of the internal sources in Moldavia, he believed *Maurocastrum* to have been in Crimea, the name of the present Cetatea Albă being considered a later invention (Bromberg, “Toponymical and Historical Miscellanies,” vol. XII/1 (1938), pp. 58–69).

6 Luca Waddingus, *Annales minorum seu trium ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum*, vol. IX (Claras Aquas, 1932), p. 298; Nicolae Iorga, *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. III (Bucharest, 1897), 32–36; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 116–118.

7 Waddingus, *Annales minorum*, vol. IX, p. 296.

8 Michel Balard, *Gênes et l’outre mer*, tom II, *Actes de Kilia du notaire Antonio di Ponzò, 1360* (Paris and New York: Mouton, 1980), p. 83, doc. 41.

Neagră and Cetatea Albă (*inferius Nigrum et Album Castra*).<sup>9</sup> Most likely, the sources refer to two different fortresses. This hypothesis is supported by the mention made to a settlement called Cerna or Czarnigrad,<sup>10</sup> in 15th century Polish sources, and even on some 17th–18th century maps, somewhere on the left bank of the Dniester, close to the river mouth.<sup>11</sup> More significantly, Slavonic sources never mistake the White Castle with the Black Castle. Polish texts in Latin do not confuse the two either. A study of several documents in the Lviv archives shows that the White Castle was only called *Albo Castro* or *Belgorod* in the 15th century.<sup>12</sup> Under the name of *Cerna*, the Black Castle follows immediately after Belgorod in the list of strongholds and towns from Russia and its surroundings from *The Novgorod First Chronicle* (the *Synodal* version, probably 1387–1396).<sup>13</sup> Finally, a place called *Czarne ruinée* is plotted on a 1650 map, north of Cetatea Albă, on the eastern bank.<sup>14</sup> It is my opinion that all these sources support the existence of two fortifications, located on the two shores of the estuary that flanks the Dniester to the sea.

The two fortresses were initially Byzantine, predate the 13th century, and had trade settlements emerge close to them. Paradoxically, the Mongol conquest of the territory north of the Black Sea after 1241 was the event that triggered the urbanization of the main port settlements from this region. The Nymphaion treaty (1261) allowed Genoese sailors to take a more active part in trading cereal crops, wax, honey, skins and even slaves north of the Black Sea. The Mongols allowed the Genoese to settle on their Crimea domains, in

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- 9 Ioannis Dlugossi, *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae*, vol. 1, ed. I. Dąbrowski (Warsaw: Naukowe, 1964), p. 75.
- 10 Literally Czarnigrad means “black fortress” in Old Slavonian.
- 11 Matei Cazacu, “A propos de l’expansion polono-lituanienne au nord de la Mer Noire aux XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. Czarnigrad, la ‘Cité Noire’ de l’embouchure du Dniestr,” in *Passé turco-tatar, présent soviétique. Études offertes à Alexandre Benningsen*, eds. Ch. Lemerrier-Quellejay, G. Veinstein and S.E. Wimbush (Louvain-Paris, 1986), pp. 100–104, 114–115; *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi staršego i mladšego izvodov*, eds. A.N. Nasonov, M.N. Tihomirov (Moscow, 1950), 475; M.N. Tihomirov, “Spisok russkikh gorodov dalnih i bližnih,” *Istoriceskie zapiski* (Moscow) vol. 40 (1952), pp. 226–229.
- 12 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–293.
- 13 The list contains a number of 358 strongholds and towns. One of the best English editions was published in 1914: *The Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016–1471*, Camden Third Series, vol. xxv, trans. Robert Michell, Nevill Forbes (London, 1914). The list of interest was not published in this edition, but in *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopisi*, p. 475.
- 14 Tihomirov, “Spisok russkikh gorodov,” pp. 226–229. See also Mariana Şlapac, *Cetatea Albă. Studiu de arhitectură militară medievală* (Chişinău, 1998), p. 17; *Cetăţi medievale din Moldova (mijlocul secolului al XIV-lea–mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)* (Chişinău, 2004), p. 52, who claims that the vanished settlement of *Czarne* must be searched near the Dniester bank.

Caffa (1266) and Sugdaia (1274), and then in the settlement on the mouth of the Dniester, where they provided them trading rights.<sup>15</sup> Shortly, they began minting coins with the Mongol *tamga* on one side, and the Genoese cross on the others, evocative of the political and economic duality in place here.<sup>16</sup>

The Genoese are first mentioned in the area by the Dniester mouth in 1290.<sup>17</sup> A document issued by the chancellery in Genoa a few years later, in 1316, forbade Genoese merchants from trading with Bulgaria, due to the refusal of the emperor of Târnovo to reimburse the Italians for damages to them on his estates. This text, which only records *Maurocastrum*, has brought divergence among historians, some believing the Mongols had relinquished Cetatea Albă to the Bulgarian emperor,<sup>18</sup> while others believe the settlement remained under direct Mongol control.<sup>19</sup> Even if we were to admit Bulgarians were present on the Dniester mouths, we cannot so readily discard the Mongol presence here, especially since Bulgaria itself was still under the sway of the Golden Horde. In all this time, the name *Asprokastron* is only linked to several notes on bishoprics in a list of eparchies under the Patriarchy of Constantinople during Andronikos II's reign (1282–1328). One bishopric is placed by some historians in Cetatea Albă, by others at the Dnieper mouth; the other was in a town by a seemingly identical name, Bielgorod, near Kiev. Another mention dates back to 1345 and concerns bishop Kirill from *Asprokastron*, who allegedly attended the election of the bishop of Smolensk.<sup>20</sup> So far, we have confirmation of the control exercised by the Patriarchate of Constantinople over this area, but nothing on the political control.

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- 15 For the early days of the Genoese presence by the Black Sea see Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929), pp. 197–249; Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>–début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1978), 114–118, 127–162; Virgil Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 150–157; Victor Spinei, “Comerțul și geneza orașelor din sud-estul Moldovei (secolele XIII–XIV)”, *Analele Brăilei*, new series, 1/1 (1993), pp. 182–184.
- 16 Octavian Iliescu, “La monnaie génoise dans les pays roumains aux XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles”, in *Colocviul româno-italian “Genovezii la Marea Neagră în secolele XIII–XIV”*. Bucharest, 1975, ed. Ștefan Pascu (Bucharest, 1977), p. 162.
- 17 Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, p. 102 and 176, doc. XL; Balard, *Gênes*, tom 1, 203, doc. 569.
- 18 Brătianu, *Recherches sur Vicina*, pp. 107–114; P.P. Panaitescu, *Introducere la istoria culturii românești. Problemele istoriografiei române*, 2nd ed. by Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest, 2000), p. 292; Giurescu, *Târguri*, p. 210; Ciocîltan, *The Mongols*, pp. 265–270.
- 19 Victor Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI–XIV* (Chișinău, 1994), 212–215.
- 20 Spinei, *Moldova*, p. 282; also Liviu Pilat, “Mitropolitul Ciprian al Rusiei, episcopia de Asprokastron și conflictul Moldovei cu Patriarhia Ecumenică”, in idem, *Studii privind relația Moldovei cu Sfântul Scaun și Patriarhia Ecumenică (secolele XIV–XVI)* (Iași: Univ. “Al. I. Cuza”, 2012), pp. 50–52.

At the middle of the 14th century the Mongols still had not left Cetatea Albă. The document mentioned above, from 1360, writes of a slave purchased from the Mongols in Cetatea Albă (*redemit a Sarracenis in loco Asperi Castrri in quo loco erat sclava*).<sup>21</sup> It was claimed that Demetrius, noted in 1368 as “prince of the Mongols,” had controlled the land by the Danube mouths, including Cetatea Albă and Kilia.<sup>22</sup> This could be valid, since Demetrius had negotiated with King Louis of Hungary a tax exemption for the merchants in “his country” in exchange for exemptions similar to those granted for the Braşov merchants. The mention made to merchants undertaking long-distance trade also implies the existence of towns.

The Genoese were active in the area, and this is supported by the capture of a Greek vessel at the hands of a Genoese ship’s crew, in 1351—its cargo would later be sold in Pera.<sup>23</sup> The town attracted a large number of Italian merchants, who came here to find the same thing that brought them North and West of the Black Sea: grain. The wheat coming from Cetatea Albă (*grano da Maocastro*), along with the one in Caffa, Vicina, and Varna, was sufficiently valuable to be mentioned in *La pratica della mercatura*, the trade manual of Florentine Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, written in the early decades of the 14th century.<sup>24</sup>

The economical and political status of Cetatea Neagră changed once the status of the land between the Carpathians and the Dniester changed as well. A new actor takes centre-stage here: the principality of Moldavia. Moldavian princes had their own conquest agendas, and these consequently led to an increased importance for Cetatea Albă. Two factors contributed to this: the development of the Moldavian alternate route for the “Mongol road” and Lithuania gaining ground towards the Black Sea after 1363, including Cetatea Albă as well. The Mongol domination in the area had been pushed away towards 1387–1390.<sup>25</sup> What we know for sure is that, when Roman I becomes self-proclaimed ruler “from mountains to the sea,” Cetatea Albă was already part of Moldavia (1392).<sup>26</sup> Its change in status explains why, in 1400, *Album Castrum*

21 Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 83, doc. 41.

22 DRH, series D, I, p. 90, doc. 49.

23 Ştefan Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre (genovezi, români și tătari în spațiul pontic în secolele XIV–XVII)* (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 2001), p. 9.

24 Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura*, ed. by Allan Evans (Cambridge, 1936), p. 42; although the index designates Vezina as, probably, the Kamchia river (or a nearby settlement) in Bulgaria (406), I am inclined to believe that this refers to Vicina on the Danube.

25 Andreescu, *Din istoria*, 15–21.

26 DRH, series A, I, p. 3, doc. 2.



was already part of the Russian vicariate, along with towns in former Galician Rus' and Moldavia, while *Maurocastrum*, together with Caffa and Sugdaia had remained in *custodia Gazaria* of the *Tartaria Aquilonaris* vicariate.<sup>27</sup> In 1410, Nicola de Porta confirms that the Genoese were still in *Mocastro*, which was in "Saracen land", and not Moldavian territory.<sup>28</sup>

Despite coming under Moldavian rule, the townspeople of Cetatea Albă enjoyed a large degree of autonomy.<sup>29</sup> Since the preserved sources mention no consul in the 14th century, historians believed the rights held here by the Genoese to have been more restricted.<sup>30</sup> Still, Hasdeu did come to examine a privilege that Alexandru the Good had granted the Genoese in 1409, containing a provision for trade storage in Cetatea Albă for them, as well as for a consul.<sup>31</sup> The Genoese certainly enjoyed the presence of a notary: in 1464, Georgio Pollo, a notary in Cetatea Albă, testified in front of the Genoese consul in Caffa. This office existed in the port by the Dniester mouth, and was required in order to legalize various commercial negotiations.<sup>32</sup>

As for the local demographics, in 1421, the Genoese are the first ones mentioned among town inhabitants, along with the Romanians, Armenians and Jews.<sup>33</sup> The Greeks, very active tradesmen, also joined them.<sup>34</sup> Among Greeks we notice the particular and well documented case of the family Vollata. The first prominent family member was George (Iurgi) Vollata, son of Fotios,<sup>35</sup> who received a safe-conduct in 1469 from the Genoese, allowing him to bring merchandise to Caffa and the other Genoese lands in the Crimea.<sup>36</sup> George was an important merchant, and his business dealings in the Levant (Constantinople,

27 Waddingus, *Annales minorum*, vol. IX, pp. 296, 298.

28 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 57.

29 Ibid. 116.

30 Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, p. 148; Spinei, "Comerțul", pp. 188–189.

31 Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 21–25.

32 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 287, doc. 13.

33 *Călători străini despre țările române*, vol. I (Bucharest, 1968), p. 50; Gr. Avakian, "Inscripțiile armenesti din Cetatea Albă", *Revista Istorică*, vol. IX, no. 7–9 (1923), p. 127. For the Jews we have an earlier reference, concerning Cetatea Albă at the middle of the 14th century (see Melchisedec Ștefănescu, "Viața Sf. Ioan cel Nou de la Suceava," *Revista pentru Istorie, Archeologie și Filologie*, II, no. 1 (1884), pp. 172–173).

34 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–283, doc. I–II.

35 E. Oberländer-Târnoaveanu, "Moldavian Merchants and Commerce in Constantinople in the 15th Century in the Book of Accounts of Giacomo Badoer", in *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, vol. II, ed. E. Popescu et al., (Bucharest: Academiei, 1991), p. 166.

36 Radu Manolescu, "Cu privire la problema patriatului în orasele Țării Românești și Moldovei (sec. XV–prima jumătate a sec. XVI)", *Cumidava*, IV (1970), p. 94. In 1468, Georgius Volatta was named *citadino de Mocastro*, being a friend of Gregorio de Reza,

Crete) date back to 1437–1438 if not earlier, as a book of accounts kept by the Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer shows.<sup>37</sup> Some scholars hold that this Iurgi is one and the same as “pan Iurghici”, a castellan (*pârcălab*) in Cetatea Albă in 1443 and member of the ruler’s council without portfolio until 1447.<sup>38</sup> His special relation with the ruler, his status as a great merchant, and his high rank in the town hierarchy gave George control over the fortress near the town. Sources reveal the Vollatas as brokers in the trade with eastern goods from Italian ports, who carried overland to Poland and onwards to Germany. They bought cloth from Lviv, which they sold for good money in Moldavia.<sup>39</sup> Following in his father enterprise, Dimitrie Vollata did not limit himself to business in Poland, for we find him in Transylvania and even Wallachia, where he was on excellent terms with the ruler: on two occasions, prince Vlad the Monk wrote to Braşov requesting that some debts be paid to “our friend, *jupan* Dimitrie Volata”.<sup>40</sup> Also in Cetatea Albă a certain merchant called Caloian is frequently noted after 1466, who lent money and goods to Polish and Armenian traders and was very influential, being called *famoso negociatori de Albo Castro* or *famoso Kaliano Greco de Albo Castro*.<sup>41</sup> Although other historians see him as a separate character,<sup>42</sup> we believe him to be a member of the Vollata family, especially since he is called Caloian Vollata in several documents.<sup>43</sup> A true dynasty of merchants was thus created: Caloian’s son, Duca, carried on the family trade, from 1481 onwards and even after Cetatea Albă was conquered by the Turks in 1484.<sup>44</sup> Since these great merchants traded with the Italian centres via the Black Sea and the Ottoman Empire (where they could travel based on a

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consul at Caffa (Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 43). In the same year 1469, George’s son, Dimitrie, is noted selling pepper in Lviv (Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 288–9, doc. xv).

37 Oberländer-Târnoaveanu, “Moldavian Merchants”, pp. 166–9.

38 Ibid. 170; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 28–32, and 103.

39 Nadel-Golobič, “Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov”, pp. 355–357. See details in F.W. Carter, *Trade and Urban Development in Poland: An Economic Geography of Cracow, from its origin to 1795*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 93–102, 115–7, 143–53.

40 Bogdan, *Documente privitoare la relațiile*, pp. 196–7, docs. CLXI–CLXII.

41 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 282–3, docs. I–II; 288, doc. XIV; p. 292, docs. XXIV–XXVII. He had enough capital to lend hundreds of florins to several merchants within one day (Ibid. 293, docs. XXXII–XXXVI).

42 See N. Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc, epoca veche*, 2nd edition, Bucharest, 1925, p. 154 and Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriatului”, p. 94.

43 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 290, docs. XVIII–XIX.

44 Ibid., p. 293, doc. XXIX; p. 294, docs. XXXVII–XLI.

1456 privilege),<sup>45</sup> they were certainly wealthy enough to have their own ships.<sup>46</sup> The Lviv privilege of 1472 refers to them as engaged in overseas trade (*mercatores transmarini Walachie*).<sup>47</sup>

However, Lviv was not the end of the road for merchants in Cetatea Albă. In 1435, a merchant from this Black Sea port is recorded as far afield as Poznań.<sup>48</sup> As I have shown, the commercial network of Cetatea Albă covered a far wider area, which included, along with Poland, the Romanian Principalities and Transylvania, other Genoese harbours in the Black Sea and Constantinople.

Proof to the large autonomy that the citizens in Cetatea Albă enjoyed is the 1454 conquest of the Ilice castle, by the Dnieper mouth, redeemed from the Mongols and controlled by the Senarega brothers.<sup>49</sup> Iorga believed that this action was a personal initiative of those in Cetatea Albă, without involving the ruler or his representatives.<sup>50</sup> Ștefan Andreescu believes however that the source which mentions the 1454 attack is proof to the involvement of the *pârcălab* in Cetatea Albă, since it refers to *magnifico ac spectabilibus dominis jupano et senioribus Albicastro*.<sup>51</sup> Regardless of the town's status, the merchants in this town rid themselves of competition by occupying Ilice, while the ruler of Moldavia consolidated his power in the area and won a beachhead further east. The two parties were interested in working together. We would later find out that the new ruler, Stephan the Great, was not so eager to return the castle of the Genoese in Caffa. Later requests from Genoa fell on deaf ears, and the fortification remained a Moldavian domain, probably until 1475.<sup>52</sup>

Another element which demonstrates the existence of a special status in Cetatea Albă is the minting of bronze coins in mid-15th century (c. 1449–1456). The coins held both the symbols of Moldavia, and a Greek cross accompanied

45 The privilege awarded by Mehmed II gave the merchants in Cetatea Albă the right of free travel with their ships to Adrianople, Bursa and Istanbul (Petre P. Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial al Poloniei la Marea Neagră în Evul Mediu," in Panaitescu, *Interpretări românești*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1994), pp. 94–5) (French ed.: P.P. Panaitescu, "La route commerciale de Pologne à la Mer Noire au Moyen Âge," *Revista Istorică Română*, vol. 111 (1933), pp. 172–193).

46 Oberländer-Târnoveanu, "Moldavian Merchants", pp. 168–9.

47 Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (ed.), *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*, vol. 11/2 (Bucharest, 1891), p. 215, doc. CXCVI.

48 Panaitescu, "Drumul comercial", pp. 84–7.

49 *Atti della Societa Ligure di Storia Patria*, vol. VI, ed. P. Amedeo Vigna (Genova, 1868), p. 307, doc. CXXI.

50 Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, pp. 32–36; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, pp. 116–118.

51 Andreescu, *Din istoria*, p. 117; *Atti della Societa Ligure*, vol. VI, p. 307, doc. CXXI.

52 Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 130; Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 118–124.

by the town name, *Asprokastron*, in Greek.<sup>53</sup> The symbol and the name are indicative of the significance of the Greek element along with the Genoese one in town.<sup>54</sup> By consent from the ruler, who was well aware this would increase his income, Cetatea Albă received the right to coinage, and was the only one in Moldavia with this right. The Moldavian ruler saw owning the town as having multiple benefits: a political-military one, since he controlled the fortress overlooking a strategic location; an economic benefit, since the customs house reaped significant income; a religious one, due to the presence of the relics of St John of Trapezunt, who was most likely martyred here.<sup>55</sup> His relics were moved around 1415 to the new Moldavian capital of Suceava and were the object of a cult spread throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>56</sup> Also there is a debate about the presence of an older bishopric here, later used to obtain acknowledgement by the Constantinople Patriarchy for a Moldavian Orthodox Metropolitan Church.<sup>57</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei support the idea of the reactivation of the bishopric in Cetatea Albă by Petru I,<sup>58</sup> but other researchers are against this perspective, as the bishopric of Asprokastron was placed in a list of bishoprics at the mouth of the Elisos (Elexos on Genovese portolans), identified with river Dnieper and not Dniester.<sup>59</sup>

The customs house in Cetatea Albă is mentioned in the 1408 privilege, while the 1456 and 1460 privileges note it as “the Mongol customs house”.<sup>60</sup> Strange is the late mention of a *pârcălab* here, a representative of the ruler’s authority,

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- 53 P. Nicorescu, “Monete moldovenești bătute la Cetatea Albă,” *Cercetări istorice* (Iași) vol. XVII (1943): pp. 75–88; Iliescu, “La monnaie génoise”: p. 161; *Monede și bancnote românești*, eds. G. Buzdugan, O. Luchian, C.C. Oprescu (Bucharest, 1977), p. 75, doc. 573–576.
- 54 Octavian Iliescu, “Les armoiries de la ville d’Asprokastron et leur origine byzantine,” in *Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines*, vol. 11, eds. Emilian Popescu, Octavian Iliescu, Tudor Teoteoi (Bucharest, 1991), pp. 157–159.
- 55 For a synthesis of the arguments brought for and against this transfer from Cetatea Albă to Suceava, see Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 244, 293–294 (note 148), and Pilat, “Mitropolitul Ciprian”, pp. 59–60.
- 56 See Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Mucenicia Sfântului Ioan cel Nou. Noi puncte de vedere,” in *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, ed. by Ionel Căndea, Paul Cernovodeanu, and Gheorghe Lazăr (Brăila: Istros, 2003), pp. 555–572.
- 57 *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, vol. IV (Bucharest, 1982), p. 269, doc. 66.
- 58 Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* (Iași: Univ. “Al. I. Cuza”, 1997), pp. 186–191.
- 59 Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 282–283; Pilat, “Mitropolitul Ciprian”, pp. 50–52.
- 60 M. Costăchescu (ed.), *Documentele moldovenești înainte de Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Iași 1932), p. 630, doc. 176; 788, doc. 231; Ioan Bogdan (ed.), *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. II (Bucharest, 1913), p. 271, doc. CXXVIII.

who features in sources since 1440.<sup>61</sup> In Moldavia, the office of *pârcălab* is first and foremost related to managing and ruling over a fortification, so it was mentioned so late due to the works started on the stronghold in that year. It is likely that, in the first years of ruling over Cetatea Albă, the princes of Moldavia were content to maintain the older fortifications, which they later sought to expand and provide with a stronger strategic purpose.



On the mouth of the Danube, a settlement with Byzantine origins existed at least from the 13th century, mentioned in the 1241 invasion.<sup>62</sup> Along with Kaliakra, Silistra, Kavarna and Licostomo, Kilia is also present in a list of *castella* for the Patriarchy of Constantinople (c. 1318–1323).<sup>63</sup> Two decades later, a foray by Turkish pirate Umur Beg d'Aydin ravaged the settlement (c. 1337–1338). The attack was meant to shatter the Mongol foothold in the area, but it missed its purpose apparently, since the Mongols regained control over the Byzantine centres by the Lower Danube, Kilia and Vicina included.<sup>64</sup>

Kilia is at the heart of a vast historiographical dispute on its location. Octavian Iliescu showed that two fortresses existed by the mouth of the Danube: an older, Byzantine stronghold, called Licostomo, on an island where river branch flowed into the sea, and another Kilia, further within, on the waterway, also on a small island south of the river branch.<sup>65</sup> Sources mention the

61 I. Bogdan, "Inscripțiile de la Cetatea-Albă și stăpânirea Moldovei asupra ei," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 2nd series, vol. 30 (1907–1908), pp. 313–325; DRH, series A, 1, p. 314, doc. 225.

62 Along with the residence of Bulgarian emperors in Târnovo, the Mongols supposedly conquered another major town, called *Kila* (Aurel Decei, "L'invasion des Tatars de 1241/1242 dans nos régions selon la Djami ot-Tevarikh de Fâzl ol-Lah Râsid od-Din," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, vol. XII, no. 1 (1973), pp. 120–121). See also Dennis Deletant, "Genoese, Tatars and Rumanians at the Mouth of the Danube in the Fourteenth Century," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 62, no. 4 (1984), p. 519.

63 *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, vol. 1, *Acta Patriarchatus Constantinopolitani*, eds. Fr. Miklosich, Jos. Müller (Vienna, 1860), p. 95, doc. LII–II.

64 Information from *Düsturnâme-i Enverî*, a rhymed Turkish chronicle (M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, "L'expédition d'Umur beg d'Aydin aux bouches du Danube (1337 ou 1338)," *Studia et acta orientalia* (Bucharest) vol. 2 (1959), pp. 13–23; *Cronici turcești privind țările române*, vol. 1, eds. M. Guboglu, Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966), pp. 36–37).

65 Being located on the Black Sea coast, Licostomo appears on many more maps from the 14th–16th centuries than Kilia, located a few dozen kilometers inside. In one of the annexed maps we present the Black Sea portolan from the *Atlante* of Battista Agnese (1534–1564), which includes both Licostomo and White Fortress, but also Kilia.

two both separately and together.<sup>66</sup> Their precise location is still not clearly determined, because the dynamic geography of the Danube Delta area brought permanent modifications to the landscape. Only ruins of the stronghold in Kilia Nouă remained to this day, but located about 50 km upstream of the current mouths of the river. The name of Kilia is derived from Greek *kellion*, which has two meanings: a chamber in a monastery and a warehouse. The last meaning is related to the intense trade activity in this town in the Middle Ages.<sup>67</sup> The 14th century saw Licostomo as having a mainly military and strategic purpose,<sup>68</sup> while Kilia had an economic one.<sup>69</sup>

Kilia, as well as the Wallachian Brăila, developed at the expense of their rival town, Vicina. Following the Genoese-Byzantine war of 1351–1352, the Genoese took advantage and reinforced their foothold in towns on the north-west Black Sea coast, Kilia included.<sup>70</sup> For a while, up until 1368–1369, Kilia is still in the shackles of Mongol rule (probably represented by Demetrius), who charged fees for trade exchanges in the harbour. Information in the 1360–1361 registry of Genoese notary Antonio di Ponzò suggests a very powerful and mobile Genoese colony, which co-existed with Greeks, Romanians, Armenians, and Mongols.<sup>71</sup> The Genoese were allowed to have consuls in Kilia and Licostomo, and the consul office was sometimes performed by notaries. The consuls and a *curia* (*curie Ianuensis in Chili* or *curie consulatus Chili*) held the Genoese accountable for their actions and regulated various trade matters.<sup>72</sup>

In the 15th century, Kilia went through various reigns, Wallachian, Moldavian, and even Hungarian. Even though Roman I was self-proclaimed ruler “to the sea” in 1392, Kilia was no part of his domain. It features in the Kiev list, not among “Vlach” strongholds and towns, but alongside other Danubian ports, as

66 G. Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360–1361)* (Genova, 1971), p. 76, doc. 45; p. 130, doc. 74; p. 167, doc. 92; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 42, doc. 12; p. 46, doc. 14; pp. 52–57, doc. 18–22; see also *Călători străini*, vol. I, pp. 15–16.

67 Octavian Iliescu, “Nouvelles contributions à la géographie historique a la Mer Noire,” *Il Mar Nero*, vol. I (1994), p. 240.

68 For example, in 1408, king Sigismund of Luxembourg invited Venetians to send to Licostomo several of their large ships in order to carry his soldiers to the straits (Andreescu, *Din istoria*, p. 53).

69 Deletant, “Genoese,” p. 522; Șerban Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia. Byzantins et Génois aux bouches du Danube au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (1978), p. 76.

70 Papacostea, “De Vicina à Kilia,” pp. 69–78.

71 Published by Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi* and Balard, *Gênes*, tom II.

72 Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, pp. 82–84, doc. 49–50; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 88, doc. 43. For how colonies by the Black Sea were organized, see Astuti, “Le colonie genovesi,” pp. 87–129.

Vicina.<sup>73</sup> Given the future evolution of the town and the fortress here, we have reason to believe that Moldavia did controlled Kilia, but for a brief period of time, after 1426, and maybe between 1446 and 1448.<sup>74</sup> Ștefan the Great realized that Cetatea Albă was not enough for his ambitions to lead a powerful regional policy and that he had to control the Danube mouths as well. Mehemed II had occupied Constantinople in 1453 and sought to claim authority over the states around the Black Sea. The strategic position of Kilia garnered Ottoman attention as well, in case an attack on Moldavia ensued. Ștefan made an attempt at conquering the fortress in 1462,<sup>75</sup> with success only in 1465.<sup>76</sup> After 1400, the urban core gradually moved to the north bank of the river, where there was already a new settlement by the ford, supported and maintained by the Moldavian princes.<sup>77</sup> It was here that Ștefan erected a new stronghold in 1479, using an impressive number of craftsmen: 800 masons and 17,000 apprentices.<sup>78</sup> The original fortress fell into ruins and now only a village named Chilia Veche<sup>79</sup> reminds us of it.

Townspeople of different origins feature as *habitor Chili*, Italians and others. Sarchis the Armenian (*Erminio*) is an important tradesman, mentioned in 1360 and 1361 while trading wax and honey with merchants in Pera and Caffa.<sup>80</sup> Documents mention Greeks as well, also Hungarians.<sup>81</sup> There were two Catholic churches, with St Francis and St Dominic as their patrons, as well as a Greek church (St John).<sup>82</sup> In 1453, we will find that the construction of a Franciscan monastery with St Bernard as its patron was planned.<sup>83</sup> The Constance council (1414–1418) was also attended by a group of people from Kilia (*Kýlo*). Texts mentioning delegations arriving at this reunion place Kilia along with Cetatea Albă and Caffa, so we may assume that mostly the Genoese

73 *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopisi*, p. 475.

74 P.P. Panaitescu, "Legăturile moldo-polone în secolul XV și problema Chilieii", *Romanoslavica*, III (1958), pp. 99–102. In February 1446, a *pârcălab* of the Moldavian prince is mentioned here indirectly (DRH, series A, I, p. 371, doc. 262); *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. P.P. Panaitescu (Bucharest, 1959), pp. 44, 48; see also Șerban Papacostea, "Kilia et la politique orientale de Sigismond de Luxembourg," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XV, no. 3 (1976), pp. 432–434.

75 DRH, series D, I, p. 440, doc. 323.

76 *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 29.

77 Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 50–58.

78 *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 34.

79 Literally Old Kilia.

80 Pistarino. *Notai Genovesi*, p. 30, doc. 19; p. 57, doc. 35.

81 *Ibid.* p. 22, doc. 15; p. 62, doc. 38; p. 103, doc. 61; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, p. 193, doc. 122.

82 Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 51, doc. 31; Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, p. 146.

83 DRH, series D, I, p. 433, doc. 317.

sent envoys.<sup>84</sup> The Genoese in Kilia, Caffa, and Pera were closely related to each other and these ties were definitely not only economic, but also spiritual.

The town featured a central marketplace, stores, dwellings, mills. Many inhabitants exported cereals, wax, honey or slaves, but were also usurers.<sup>85</sup> Some names of bankers have been preserved: Francesco and Laurencio Bustarino, Giorgio de Chaveghia di Voltri and Luchino de Bennama.<sup>86</sup> Cereals, and especially wheat, are the staple of export goods coming from here. Wheat was carried by Italians to Constantinople: the above-mentioned register indicates that, from August to October 1360, ships with no less than 25,000 quintals of cereals,<sup>87</sup> a sizable amount, depart from the mouths of the Danube.

It was claimed that the town had even received the right to mint its own coins, more specifically, silver asprons (*asperi centum de Chili*), probably an imitation of Mongolian asprons, featured in a 1361 transaction.<sup>88</sup> The same documents note the phrase *ad pondus Chili*, showing a local standard of measurement to have existed.<sup>89</sup> *Licostomo asprons* have been identified as well.<sup>90</sup> Later on, when Kilia entered Hungarian domain, Hungarians come into town. A 1484 document regulating fishing in the area has 20 fisherman names, with seven of them belonging to Hungarians.<sup>91</sup> Historical sources are not as generous on the period when the town was under Moldavian rule (or Wallachian), a period we know little about. The customs house mentioned here probably brought significant income to the ruler.<sup>92</sup>

One after the other, the Christian towns by the Black Sea fell to Ottoman rule. After Caffa (1475) came the Moldavian ports which, although avoiding occupation in 1475–1476, could not withstand an Ottoman invasion led by sultan Bāyezīd II in 1484. Kilia fell first, in July, because of the treason of one of the town leaders.<sup>93</sup> Cetatea Albă was next, in August, which surrendered after

84 Constantin I. Karadja, "Delegații din țara noastră la conciliul din Constanța (în Baden) în anul 1415," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 111rd series, vol. 7 (1926–1927), p. 82.

85 Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, pp. 149–150.

86 Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, p. 3, doc. 1; p. 50, doc. 31; p. 47, doc. 29; Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, pp. 148–153, doc. 87–92; pp. 156–158, doc. 94–97.

87 See the calculations of Michel Balard, *La Mer Noire et la Romanie génoise (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1989), p. 220.

88 Pistarino, *Notai Genovesi*, 175, doc. 97.

89 Balard, *Gênes*, tom II, 132, doc. 77; 140, doc. 81.

90 Iliescu, "La monnaie génoise", pp. 164, 166.

91 Nicoară Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville ottomane au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Etudes et actes*, (Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1973), p. 167, doc. XI.

92 Costăchescu, *Documentele moldovenești înainte*, vol. II, p. 681, doc. 192.

93 *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 10, 19; *Cronici turcești*, vol. I, pp. 76–78, 130–132, 325–327; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "La conquête des cités marchandes de Kilia et de Cetatea Albă par Bayezid II," *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. XXIII (1964), p. 68.



negotiations and several days of bombing.<sup>94</sup> At this siege the Turks negotiated with five of the most important men in town (*homeni principali*),<sup>95</sup> and the *Moldavian-German Chronicle* mentions that after the conquest the Ottomans “took with them the better people (*das best Volck*) to Constantinople.”<sup>96</sup> A 1488–89 Ottoman tax register includes information on 1099 families relocated from Cetatea Albă to Istanbul and Galata. A yearly tax is also noted for 660 families, amounting to over 250 aspers per year for 38 families; the high taxation suggests that some in these families were part of the patriciate when the Turks assaulted the town.<sup>97</sup>

As for Kilia, Ștefan’s stronghold, as well as its nearby town, persisted under Ottoman rule. Even though it did not succumb completely as a fortification, the ancient Kilia on the southern bank fell to ruin.<sup>98</sup> Licostomo followed in its tracks in the 15th century. Iorga identified a certain Petru Messopero de Ansaldo, who traded in Lviv in 1440 and called himself *haeres Licostomi* (“Licostomo’ heir”) and *consul Francorum*. The historian believes this title to have been make-believe, and not politically accurate, since Licostomo had lost its importance.<sup>99</sup> Licostomo had a fate similar to Kilia’s, alternating between Wallachian and Moldavian control.<sup>100</sup> In 1484, when Kilia is conquered by the Ottomans, Licostomo was in ruins. The Ottomans rebuild its walls, in an attempt to secure a control post where the river joined the sea.<sup>101</sup> As the Danube Delta advanced further, this post was abandoned.



Even though Cetatea Albă and Kilia became part of the Ottoman Empire, the inhabitants preserved the same ample autonomy. The Ottoman sultans applied

94 *Cronici slavo-române*, pp. 10, 19; *Cronici turcești*, vol. 1, pp. 76–78, 130–132, 325–327; Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 68–69. For chronology and a detailed perspective on the conquest of the two cities, see Liviu Pilat, Ovidiu Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during the 15th Century* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 191–218.

95 Manolescu, “Cu privire la problema patriciatului,” 92.

96 *Cronicile slavo-române*, 35.

97 N. Beldiceanu, “La Moldavie ottomane à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début de XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Revue des études islamiques*, 37, no. 2 (1969), pp. 243–247; also, Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités,” pp. 72–76.

98 Șlapac, *Cetăți medievale*, 64–66.

99 Nicolae Iorga, “Lucruri noi despre Chilia și Cetatea Albă,” *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, 3rd series, vol. 5 (1926), pp. 325–326; Șerban Papacostea, “La fin de la domination génoise à Licostomo,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Iași*, vol. XXII, no. 1 (1985), p. 33.

100 Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 52–56.

101 Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, vol. III, p. 85; Iorga, *Studii istorice*, p. 53.

similar politics when occupying the mining areas in Serbia and Bosnia or the lands owned in Asia or Africa by the Mamluks, the reasons being political, as well as economic.<sup>102</sup> Merchants in Cetatea Albă received favourable tax duties, similar to those applied to other large towns of the Empire, a sign that the sultan wished to ensure the development of this major harbour. Some elements of tax and legal organization in the period of Moldavian rule endured. In the documents granted the town, there are several mentions of the taxes that were to be collected as per the customs of old, and where the Ottoman legislation made allowance for no new provisions, the “law of old” was to be in force.<sup>103</sup>

The two ports in the north-western area of the Black Sea played a significant part, both in economic, and political terms. On the one hand, they served as an interface for sea trade—mostly handled by the Genoese, but also Greeks—and land trade. Moldavia found these ports to be an appropriate outlet for its produce, grain, honey, leather, fish and livestock, while foreign merchants had access to the local market, by bringing in cloth, Eastern merchandise, spices and silks. It is no accident that the main roads of the country led to Cetatea Albă and Kilia, as this was also the route of the Moldavian version of the *via tartarica* or the “Mongol road”, which connected Poland to the Black Sea.

Furthermore, these ports relayed merchandise to more remote European markets, in Hungary or Constantinople. This was the background where control over these two towns became a major stake for local powers, and not only for Moldavia. At the end of the 15th century, the Ottoman Empire would consolidate its position as the main political force in the Black Sea area, and would enforce control over the two ports.

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102 Beldiceanu, “La conquête des cités”, pp. 80–81.

103 Ibid. 71, 80; Beldiceanu, *Recherche sur la ville*, p. 173, doc. XIII.

# “*La Rotta Della Tana*” (1343): the Viewpoint of Venetian Chronicles

Șerban Marin

This paper approaches the manner in which the event of “*la rotta della Tana*” in 1343 was represented in 216 Venetian chronicles that cover this period. They are preserved either in manuscript (196)<sup>1</sup> or—in a much smaller number (20)—as edited works. This number involves works written in the period between the 14th and the 18th centuries, so they are rather secondary sources.<sup>2</sup> Under these circumstances, they are not quite useful for reconstructing the events, but for understanding the manner in which the events were represented in time. However, they mirror very well the viewpoint of the Venetian society on certain events in the past.

Percentually, the event of the expulsion of the Venetians from Tana at the order of Khan Djanibeg is very well represented in 154 Venetian chronicles

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1 Located at Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (115), the library of Museo Civico Correr (63), the library of Querini-Stampalia Foundation (4), Archivio di Stato di Venezia (4), all of them in Venice, and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (10).

2 The main sources for this event are in *Diplomatarium Veneto-levantinum sive acta et diplomata res venetas, grecas sive Levantis illustrantia*, pars 1: *a. 1300–1350*, ed. by G.M. Thomas & R. Predelli, (Venice, 1880), but also the narratives of Giorgio Stella, Nikephoros Gregoras, Cantacuzino. For the presentation of the events, see especially W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, 11, (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1936), 187 ff.; Freddy Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, 1, (Paris-The Hague: Mouton, 1958), pp. 77, 82; Michel Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>–début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, 1, (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1978), pp. 154, 158; Șerban Papacostea, “Quod non iretur ad Tanam. Un aspect fundamental de la politique génoise dans la mer Noire au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 17 (1974), pp. 201–217 (206); Virgil Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 202 ff.

(representing 71.30%),<sup>3</sup> when narrating the dogeship of Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354). Only 62 chronicles ignore this event.<sup>4</sup>

However, despite mentions in the majority of these texts, the most usual manner of presentation (112 chronicles, 51.85%) is a simple one, like an informative note in the chronicle in manuscript Ci 1898 that says: *Corrando li anni del nostro Signor 1343 fo la rotta alla Tana per modo che non se pote piu nauegar in quelle parte fina l'anno 1348* [During the year of Our Lord 1343, the break of Tana took place, so that it was not possible to navigate in those parts until year

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- 3 *Venetiarum Historia*, 226; M 37, 50b; Co 1499, 26a, col. 2; pseudo-Dandolo, 122–123; Morosini A., 60–61; M 2545, 78b, col. 2–79a, col. 1; Caresini 392c, 20b, col. 1; Co 1013, [95b]; Querini, 46b; Filippo 18, 83b, col. 2; Filippo 120, [79a, col. 1]; M 2548, 24a, col. 2; M 2549, 33a, col. 1; Monaci, 207–208; M 2556, 83; M 1X 28, 46b, col. 1; Ci 2113, 36a–36b; M 2564, 100b; M 2569, 65a; Contarini D., 96b, col. 1–96b, col. 2; M 2034, 213a, col. 2; F 6117, 77b, col. 1–77b, col. 2; M 104, 88a; Ci 3518, 99a; M Z 20, 77b; M 2565, 57a; Ci 592, 74b; M 796, 106b; pseudo-Dolfìn, 75a; Vitturi, 43a, col. 1; Ci 2116, 40a, col. 2; Ci 2413, [59b]; M 2559, 33a, col. 2; Gr 53, 23a, col. 1; ASV 59, 55b; ASV 58, 132a; M 2566, 35b; Co 1337, 95b; F 6147, 153b; Ci 3753, 139b, col. 2; ASV 61, 35b; Sanudo, 61; M 324, 107b–108a; M 2546, [57a]; DDR 121, 30a–30b; M 541, 54a; M 550, 93b; M 788, 48b; Antonio, 29a; Dolfìn, 33b; PD 482c, 56b; Co 1046, 24a, col. 2; Co 760, 37a, col. 1; Co 760 bis, 127b; Ci 1899, 74a; WL 74–3, 93a; PD 380c, fasc. 1, 1a; pseudo-Dandolo 873, 112b, col. 2–113a, col. 1; Pigno, 198a; M 2544, 55b, col. 1; F 3458, 80a; Ci 589, 72a–72b; M 798, xxx a; Cavalli, 74b; M 51, 110b, col. 2; Zancaruolo, 38b; Gussoni, 23; PD 236c, 85a; M 2571, 199b–200a; M 2576, 40b; M 2573, 153a; Caroldo, 9; Rosso, 49b; M 2543, 85a; Ci 2123, 93b; Rotta, 21b; M 555, 53a, col. 2; pseudo-Barbaro, 247a–247b; Ci 1982, 39b, col. 1; Ci 1982 bis, 132b; Ci 1900, [42a]; M 2037, 195b; M 322, 77b; pseudo-Trevisan 1327, 71a–71b; Ci 3599, 105b–106a; Abbiosi, 32b; M 45, 63a; M 2568, 39b; M 2568 bis, 224b–225a; M 2567, 69a, col. 2–69b, col. 1; M 47, 46a, col. 2 (although the text is illegible, due to the ink used in the manuscript); pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275, cclxxxvj a; M Z 21, 28a; Ci 1898, [166a]; M 628a, 105b; M 53, 164a; PD 312c, 52b; Ci 3712, 126b; pseudo-Erizzo, 75a; Co 1045, 75b; Grandis, 174a; Balanzana, 83b; Veniera 2580, 156a; Ci 3725, 85a; Magno 513, 90a; Magno 514, 133a–133b; Valier, 173a; M 39, 43a; M 2581, 166b; Tiepolo, 300; Agostini, 53b; Veniera 1568, 168b; MG 327, 362; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 180b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675, LIX a; PD 378c, 60a; Veniera 791, 77b; pseudo-Trevisan 519, 101b, col. 1–101b, col. 2; Savina, 123a; M 2578, 4b; Ci 3556–7, 25b; M 1586, 66a; Alberegno, 118a; M 327, 88b; M 2550, 101b; Ci 590, 62a; M 2046, 150a; pseudo-Alberegno, 373b; M 91–3, 626a; Co 1421, 130a; Vitaliani, 48b; Ci 2234, 425; Lio, 144b; Morosini P., 239; F 6241, 59b; M 2395, 180a; M 2669, 148a; M 43, 77b; M 44, 49a–49b; pseudo-A. Donato, 49b; M 54, 215b; Contarini M., 49a; pseudo-Dandolo 102, 70a; M 61, libro 10, 44; M 66 bis, 101a; Co 1456, 151b; Sivos, 139b–140a; M 79, 50b; Q 36, 155b, col. 1; Dinarelli, 31a; M 64, 257a; F 6566, 57b; Veniera 2302, 142; Astori, 161.
- 4 M 89; M 1X 28 bis; M 2563; M 38; M 2560; Sabellico; M 52; ASV 60; M 2555; Marcello; Q 15; F 6234; M 46; MG 249; Cornaro; M 1662; Ci 1983; pseudo-Navagero; F 6211; M 60; Ci 2754; pseudo-T. Donato; M 728 bis; Ci 351; M 87; Giustinian; Sansovino; PD 391c; M 793; M 393; M 303; Doglioni; M XI 77; M 31; M 58; F 6821; Co 1305; M 59; M 67; Co 1032; Co 1307; Fougasses; Alario; M 2541; Contarena; M 2572; M 80; Co 1306; M 70; M 75; M 2602; Vianoli; Verdizzotti; pseudo-Barba; M 1999; Falier; M 1577; M 2028; Diedo; M 1833; Laugier; M 1669.

1348], or similar expressions.<sup>5</sup> Among those chronicles that make such a statement, a small number (10) definitely stops presenting the deeds at this point,<sup>6</sup> while all the others, meaning the greatest part of them, continue the narration, becoming thus anticipative and getting involved in the event of taking again of the mercantile activities in Tana in 1347,<sup>7</sup> when the three galleys under the commandment of Marco Morosini brought the Venetian ambassadors in front of the khan of the Tatars in Golden Horde, in order to negotiate and receive the privilege to restart the trade in the area.<sup>8</sup>

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- 5 Co 1499; Caresini 392c (although a little more developed presentation); Co 1013; Querini; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; M 2548; M 2549; M 2556; Ci 2113; M 2564; M 2569; Contarini D.; M 2034; M 104; Ci 3518; M Z 20; M 2565; Ci 592; Vitturi; Ci 2116; Ci 2413; M 2559; ASV 59; ASV 58; M 2566; Co 1337; F 6147; Ci 3753; ASV 61; M 541; M 550; M 788; Antonio; PD 482c; Co 1046; Co 760 bis; Ci 1899; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 2544; M 798; Cavalli; Zancaruolo; Gussoni; PD 236c; M 2576; M 2573; Rosso; M 2543; Ci 2123; Rotta; M 555; Ci 1982 bis; Ci 1900; M 2037; M 322; Ci 3599; Abbiosi; M 45; M 2568; M 47; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; M Z 21; Ci 1898; M 628a; M 53; PD 312c; Ci 3712; pseudo-Erizzo; Co 1045; Grandis; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 513; Valier; M 39; Veniera 1568; MG 327; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675; PD 378c; Veniera 791; M 2578; Ci 3556–7 [in a short form]; M 1586; Alberegno; M 327; M 2550; Ci 590; M 2046; pseudo-Alberega; Co 1421; Ci 2234; Lio; F 6241; M 2395; M 2669; M 43; M 44; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Contarini M.; M 66 bis; Co 1456; M 79; Q 36; Dinarelli; M 64; F 6566; Veniera 2302.
- 6 Ci 3518; M Z 20; M 2565; M 541; M 798; M 2037; M 628a; Alberegno; Ci 590; pseudo-Alberega.
- 7 For the treaty in 1347, see *Misti Senato 19 giug. 1347* p. 18 t<sup>o</sup> e libro *Spiritus* 385 t<sup>o</sup> 15 mag. 1348 *apud* S. Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, 111, (Venice: Naratovich, 1855), p. 154 note 4; Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Notizie da Caffa*, in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, 111, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1962), pp. 266–295 (274); *Diplomatarium* cit., 311–313; W. Heyd, *op. cit.*, 11, 197–198; George Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia*, (New Haven-London, 1953), p. 204; Elena Č. Sakržinskaja, “Storia della Tana”, *Studi Veneziani*, 19 (1968), pp. 1–33 (11); Papacostea, “Quod non iretur”, pp. 208–210; Ciociltan, *Mongolii*, pp. 197–198.
- 8 Co 1499, 26a, col. 2–26b, col. 1; Caresini 392c, 20b, col. 1; Co 1013, [95b]; Querini, 46b; Filippo 18, 83b, col. 2; Filippo 1120, [79a, col. 1]–[79a, col. 2]; M 2548, 24a, col. 2–24b, col. 1; M 2549, 33a, col. 1; M 2556, 83; Ci 2113, 36b; M 2564, 100b; M 2569, 65a–65b; Contarini D., 96b, col. 2; M 2034, 213a, col. 2; M 104, 88a; Ci 3518, 100a (inserted only later); Ci 592, 74b; Vitturi, 43a, col. 1; Ci 2116, 40a, col. 2; Ci 2413, [59b]; M 2559, 33a, col. 2; ASV 59, 55b; ASV 58, 132a; M 2566, 35b; Co 1337, 95b; F 6147, 153b; Ci 3753, 139b, col. 2; ASV 61, 35b; M 550, 93b; M 788, 48b; Antonio, 29a; PD 482c, 56b; Co 1046, 24a, col. 2; Co 760 bis, 127b; Ci 1899, 74a; WL 74–3, 93a; Pigno, 198a; M 2544, 55b, col. 1; Cavalli, 74b; Zancaruolo, 38b; Gussoni, 23; PD 236c, 85a; M 2576, 40b; M 2573, 153a; Rosso, 49b; M 2543, 85a; Ci 2123, 93b; Rotta, 21b; M 555, 53a, col. 2; Ci 1982 bis, 132b; Ci 1900, [42a]; M 322, 77b; Ci 3599, 106a; Abbiosi, 32b; M 45, 63a; M 2568, 39b; M 47, 46a, col. 1; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275, cclxxxv j a; M Z 21, 28a; Ci 1898, [166a]; M 53, 164a; PD 312c, 52b; Ci 3712, 126b; pseudo-Erizzo, 75a–75b; Co 1045, 75b; Grandis, 174a; Balanzana, 83b; Veniera 2580, 156a; Ci 3725, 85a; Magno 513, 90a; Valier, 173a; M 39, 43a–43b; Veniera 1568, 168b–169a; MG 327, 362; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 180b, but also later at 191b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675, LIX a; PD 378c, 60a; Veniera 791, 77b; M 2578, 4b; Ci 3556–7, 25b; M 1586, 66b; M 327, 88b; M 2550, 101b; M 2046, 150a; Co 1421, 130a; Ci 2234, 425; Lio, 144b;

All these texts do not get involved in details related to what this *rotta* meant. Six of them even noted that (according to Ci 3753): *La dita bataglia fo non se sano a che modo, pero jo non la noto* / “It is not known in which manner the aforesaid battle took place, so I do not write it down”.<sup>9</sup>

However, another part of the Venetian chronicles gets into details. Although in smaller number (35, representing 16.20%),<sup>10</sup> they refer to the case of the Venetian nobleman that came into conflict with a Saracen and killed him and his family during the night,<sup>11</sup> thus provoking a real mishmash in Tana, which led to this drastic upshot, that is a long interruption in the Venetian trade with the Golden Horde. The Venetian is identified in only five cases, as Giovanni Contarini (three chronicles)<sup>12</sup> or as a member of the Civran family (two chronicles),<sup>13</sup> while some other also speak about the captain of the Venetian galleys in Tana at that moment, that is Nicolò Belegno *el Cucco*.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, the chronicles note the presence of *alios Christianos existentes/tutj lj altri Xpiani* / “other Christians”<sup>15</sup> or “the Franks”<sup>16</sup> in this context or, more specifically, the Genoese.<sup>17</sup> Some of these latter cases make also connections with the tensions between the Venetians and the Genoese, such as preparing the

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- F 6241, 59b; M 2395, 180a; M 2669, 148a; M 43, 77b; M 44, 49b; pseudo-A. Donato, 49b; M 54, 215b–216a; Contarini M., 49a–49b; M 66 bis, 101a–101b; Co 1456, 151b; M 79, 50b–51a; Dinarelli, 31a; M 64, 257a; F 6566, 57b; Veniera 2302, 142.
- 9 Ci 3753; M 2573; M 53; Grandis; Valier; Q 36.
- 10 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 37; pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; M 2545; Monaci; F 6117; M 796; pseudo-Dolfín; Gr 53; Sanudo (although a very brief reference); M 324; M 2546; DDR 121; Dolfín; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; M 2571; pseudo-Barbaro (but with few details, the accent being put on the Genoese context); pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2568 bis; M 2567; Magno 514; M 2581; Tiepolo; Agostini; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; pseudo-Trevisan 519; Savina; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Sivos; Astori.
- 11 An exception is the case of Astori, where it results that the Venetian was under the attack of the Saracen.
- 12 Tiepolo; Agostini; Sivos. As for F 6117, M 2571 and Savina, they use the plural, speaking about “*algunj nobellj de Venjexia* / some Venetian noblemen”.
- 13 Monac L.; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815.
- 14 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 2545; F 6117; M 324 (which replaces Belegno with Barbaro as captain’s last name!); M 2546; M 2571; M 2568 bis; M 2567; Magno 514; M 2581; pseudo-Trevisan 519.
- 15 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 2545; Caresini 392c; Monaci; F 6117; M 796; M 2546; M 51; M 2568 bis; Magno 514; M 2581.
- 16 M 2545; F 6117; M 2546; M 2571; M 2581.
- 17 M 37; pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; Monaci; M 796; pseudo-Dolfín; Gr 53; M 324; Dolfín; PD 380c; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; Caroldo; pseudo-Barbaro; M 2567; Tiepolo; Agostini; pseudo-Trevisan 519; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Sivos; Astori.

ground for the new war between the two rival Italian Republics in 1350–1355.<sup>18</sup> There are also two works that, despite ignoring the *rotta della Tana*, refer to the conflict with the Genoese by mentioning also the situation in Tana.<sup>19</sup>

In 23 of these works, the Venetian mission of Marco Morosini is also inserted in the narration, but only later in most of the cases, along with other references to Tana, meaning at its right place (year 1347) in the chronology of the events.<sup>20</sup>

A completely different scenario refers to the intervention of the Tatars against Tana and their cruelty against the Christians there (six texts, that is only 2.78%),<sup>21</sup> while chronicles Tiepolo, Agostini and Sivos also insert strange references to Timur Lenk. Very short presentations are delivered by Morosini P. and M 61, which only refer to the prejudices suffered by the Venetian merchants, before getting involved in the mission of Marco Morosini.

Regardless of the scenario followed by one text or another, there are some cases that change the year 1343 (which still remains in majority—95, representing 43.98% of all the chronicles)<sup>22</sup> in favor of 1344 (37, that is 17.13%)<sup>23</sup> or

18 Monaci; Dolfin; PD 380c; Caroldo; pseudo-Barbaro; Tiepolo; Agostini; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; Sivos. One could add here some texts that had not referred previously to the “*rotta*”: F 6211; M 60.

19 F 6211; M 60.

20 *Venetiarum Historia*, 229; M 37, 50b; M 2545, 79a, col. 2; Caresini 392c, 20b, col. 1–20b, col. 2; Ci 3518, 100a; M 796, 107a; Sanudo, 611; M 324, 108a; M 2546, [57a], [58a]; DDR 121, 30b; Dolfin, 34a, 34a, 38a–38b; M 2571, 200b, 204a; pseudo-Barbaro, 247b; Magno 514, 136a; M 2581, 167a, 169a; Tiepolo, 300–301; Agostini, 54a; Savina, 123a–123b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 191a–191b; Morosini P., 1, 239; M 61, libro 10, 44; Sivos, 140a; Diedo, 128–129 (although not mentioning previously the “*rotta della Tana*” itself).

21 M IX 28; Co 760; PD 380c; M 51; Caroldo; Ci 1982. Among them, the later diplomatic mission in 1347 is absent in PD 380c and Caroldo.

22 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 37; pseudo-Dandolo; M 2545; Caresini 392c; Co 1013; Querini; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; Monaci; M IX 28; Ci 2113; M 2564; M 2569; Contarini D.; M 2034; F 6117; M Z 20; Ci 592; ASV 59; M 2566; Co 1337; F 6147; Ci 3753; Sanudo (but the case of the Venetian nobleman is dated in 1342); M 324 (later); M 2546; DDR 121; M 541 (on the margin of the text); M 550; M 788; PD 482c; Co 1046; Co 760; Co 760 bis; Ci 1899; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 2544; Cavalli; Zancaruolo; Gussoni; PD 236c; M 2571; M 2573; M 2543; Ci 2123; Rotta; Ci 1982; Ci 1982 bis; M 322; M 45; M 2568; M 2568 bis; M 2567; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; M Z 21; Ci 1898; M 53; PD 312c; Ci 3712; Co 1045; Grandis; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 514; Valier; M 2581; Veniera 1568; MG 327; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675; Veniera 791; pseudo-Trevisan 519; M 2578; M 1586; M 327; Ci 590; M 2046; Co 1421; Ci 2234; Lio; F 6241; M 2395; M 43; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Contarini M.; M 66 bis; Co 1456; M 79; Q 36; M 64; F 6566; Veniera 2302.

23 Morosini A.; M 2548; M 2549; M 2556; M 104; M 796; pseudo-Dolfin; Vitturi; Ci 2413; M 2559; Gr 53; ASV 58; ASV 61; M 324; Antonio; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; M 555; Ci 1900; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; Ci 3599; Abbiosi; pseudo-Erizzo; Magno 513; M 39; Tiepolo; Agostini; PD 378c; M 2550; Vitaliani; M 2669; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Sivos; Astori.

of other years<sup>24</sup> for the *rotta della Tana*. Instead, for the resumption of the trade in Tana, year 1347 is attested in documents,<sup>25</sup> but in only eight of the chronicles.<sup>26</sup> Most of them refer to 1348 (107, that is 49.54%),<sup>27</sup> sometimes even 1349 (18, representing 8.33%).<sup>28</sup> Related to this latter event, there are also other years taken into consideration<sup>29</sup> and some cases also locate the events to the month of April.<sup>30</sup> There are also some cases that avoid specifying a particular year for either the *rotta*,<sup>31</sup> or Morosini's diplomatic mission.<sup>32</sup>

As for the term of *rotta*, it became the most used, although it is sometimes, in isolated cases, in "competition" with others, like *fato darne*,<sup>33</sup> *bataia*,<sup>34</sup>

24 1318 (sic! copier's error) in Ci 2116; 1342 in Dolfin; 1347 in Co 1499; 1348 (sic! due to a probable copier's error, it results the same year for the both events related to Tana) in Dinarelli; 134? in M 91–3 (the last figure is illegible).

25 See above.

26 *Venetiarum Historia*; Caresini 392c; M 324 (later); M 2546; Dolfin (indirectly); M 2571 (later); Magno 514 (later); M 2581 (later).

27 M 37 (indirectly); Co 1499; ED (indirectly); Co 1013; Querini; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; M 2556; M 1x 28; Ci 2113; M 2564; M 2569; Contarini D.; M 2034; Ci 3518; M Z 20; M 2565; Ci 592; M 796; Vitturi; Ci 2413; ASV 59; M 2566; Co 1337; F 6147; Ci 3753; ASV 61; M 324; DDR 121; M 541; M 550; M 788; PD 482c; Co 1046; Co 760; Co 760 bis; Ci 1899; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 798; Cavalli; M 51; Zancaruolo; Gussoni; PD 236c; M 2576; M 2573; Rosso; M 2543; Rotta; Ci 1982; Ci 1982 bis; M 2037; M 322; M 45; M 2568; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; M Z 21; Ci 1898; M 628a; M 53; PD 312c; Ci 3712; pseudo-Erizzo; Co 1045; Grandis; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 513; Valier; M 39; Tiepolo; Agostini; Veniera 1568; MG 327; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675; PD 378c; Veniera 791; M 2578; M 1586; Alberegno; M 327; M 2550; Ci 590; M 2046; pseudo-Alberega; Co 1421; Lio; F 6241; M 2395; M 2669; M 43; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Contarini M.; M 66 bis; Co 1456; Sivos; M 79; Q 36; Dinarelli; M 64; F 6566; Veniera 2302.

28 Morosini A. (indirectly); M 2548; M 2549; M 796 (indirectly); pseudo-Dolfin (indirectly); M 2559; Gr 53 (indirectly); ASV 58; pseudo-Dandolo 873 (indirectly); F 3458 (indirectly); Ci 589 (indirectly); M 555; pseudo-Trevisan 1327 (indirectly); Ci 3599; Tiepolo (later); Vitaliani (indirectly); pseudo-Dandolo 102 (indirectly); Astori (indirectly).

29 1343 (a clear error of copying, since previously it referred to 5 years of lack of commerce, meaning thus that it should be about 1348) in M 37; Dolfin (later); 1344 in Ci 2116; M 2544; Diedo; 1345 in Caresini 392c; M 104; Antonio; Ci 1900; Abbiosi; 1346 in M 2567 (indirectly); 134? in M 91–3 (five years after the *rotta*); 1350 in Monaci.

30 M 37; Co 1499; Co 1013; Contarini D.; M 796; DDR 121; M 322; M 44 (although the years are left under lacunae).

31 Ci 3518 (on the other hand, the day of the event is clearly specified: 7th of June); M 2565; PD 380c; M 798; M 51; M 2576; Caroldo; Rosso; pseudo-Barbaro; M 2037; M 47; M 628a; Savina; Ci 3556–7; Alberegno; pseudo-Alberega; Morosini P.; M 44 (lacuna in the text); M 61.

32 M 2545; F 6117; Sanudo; PD 380c; Caroldo; Ci 2123; pseudo-Barbaro; M 2568 bis; M 47; pseudo-Trevisan 519 (lacuna in the text); Savina; Ci 3556–7; Ci 2234 (saying *assaisissimi anni*); Morosini P.; M 44 (lacuna in the text); M 61.

33 M 2573; M 53; Grandis; Valier; Q 36.

34 M 2568 bis; Magno 514; Valier; Tiepolo; Agostini; Sivos; Q 36.



*solleuatione*,<sup>35</sup> *nouita*,<sup>36</sup> *briga*,<sup>37</sup> *dissension*,<sup>38</sup> *maliportamenti*,<sup>39</sup> *rissa*,<sup>40</sup> *letigio*,<sup>41</sup> *un gran desordene*,<sup>42</sup> *inzuria*,<sup>43</sup> *insulto*<sup>44</sup> or simply *una priuata questione*.<sup>45</sup>

The location of Tana is present under this name and form in all the chronicles that mention the events in 1343 and 1347. In addition, some of them are more specific, noting also *in partibus Gazarie*.<sup>46</sup>

There are only five of those cases that speak about a first failure in the negotiations with the Tatars, in which Marco Ruzzini and Giovanni Steno were involved as first envoys.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, the successful mission of Marco Morosini and of those ambassadors that accompanied him in *Tartaria* is almost unanimously present (166 chronicles), being placed either immediately after the *rotta*, or later, at the chronological right moment, as we mentioned above. On the whole, the absence of this mission is registered in only 28 cases,<sup>48</sup> beside those that completely ignore any reference to the episode in Tana. On the contrary, chronicle Diedo<sup>49</sup> mentions the diplomatic mission for the trade in Tana, but without having previously mentioned the episode of the *rotta*! Usually, it refers to a mission commanded by Marco Morosini as captain of a fleet of three galleys (it is somehow surprising that, according to 24 narrative sources, these galleys were “armed”,<sup>50</sup> thus suggesting the idea that it was about a not so diplomatic mission!), in which fleet two ambassadors were

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- 35 Pseudo-Trevisan 519 (on the margin of the text); M 61.  
 36 M 2545; Sanudo; M 324; M 2546; Dolfin (on the margin of the text); PD 380c; M 2571; Caroldo; M 2581; Morosini P.  
 37 M 2545; M 2546; M 2571; Magno 514; M 2581.  
 38 M 2545; Caresini 392c; M 2546; M 2571; Dolfin; M 2581 (“*defension*”).  
 39 PD 380c; Caroldo.  
 40 M 2545; M 2571; pseudo-Barbaro; M 2581.  
 41 M 2545; Monaci; M 2571; M 2581.  
 42 Pseudo-Trevisan 519.  
 43 Pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; Monaci; pseudo-Dolfin; Dolfin; F 3458; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2567; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; pseudo-Trevisan 519; Savina; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Astori.  
 44 Savina (on the margin of the text).  
 45 Pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815.  
 46 Caresini 392c; Monaci; Dolfin; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815.  
 47 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 2545; M 2546; M 2571; M 2581. For this mission, see *Misto Senato* 12 giug. 1344 p. 30.  
 48 Pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; M 2545; Monaci; M Z 20; M 2565; pseudo-Dolfin; Gr 53; M 541; PD 380c; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; M 798; Caroldo; M 2037; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2568 bis; M 2567; M 628a; pseudo-Trevisan 519; Alberegno; Ci 590; pseudo-Alberegno; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Astori.  
 49 Diedo, 128–129.  
 50 Querini; M 2564; M 2569; M 2034; Ci 592; ASV 58; M 2566; Sanudo; Co 1046; Ci 1899; Cavalli; Zancaruolo; PD 236c; M 2543; Ci 1982 bis; Ci 3599; M 45; M Z 21; pseudo-Erizzo; M 2578; M 1586; M 327; F 6241; M 79.

present (Giuffredo Morosini and Giovanni Querini), entrusted with the mission to negotiate with the khan. At least, this is the version offered by a consistent number of the Venetian texts that narrate this mission (76, representing 35.19%).<sup>51</sup> One could add here those four chronicles that, although referring to the two ambassadors, omit to note the name of G. Querini<sup>52</sup> but also those 12 that do not mention the two ambassadors' names<sup>53</sup> and those four that, on the contrary, forget to specify the captain's name.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the number increases to 96 (that is, 44.44%) that refer to the fleet of three galleys that led two ambassadors to the khan, so that the peace treaty was concluded and the trade in Tana was revived. The same number of participants (one captain and two ambassadors) is also registered in 11 other cases;<sup>55</sup> it is just that these chronicles make a distinction, referring to two separated missions: first, the two ambassadors are envoyed to the Tatars, and only afterwards the three galleys commanded by Marco Morosini are sent to Tana. This order of events is reversed in the case of Tiepolo, Agostini and Sivos, where M. Morosini is presented as acting even before the "*rotta*". Among these texts, a special mention should be made on chronicle Caresini 392c, which also refer to two different years: 1345 for the ambassadors and 1347 for M. Morosini's mission.

A number of chronicles changes the number of ambassadors, from two to three. Among them, 14 sources<sup>56</sup> include Marco Morosini along with Giuffredo Morosini and Giovanni Querini, so that he is both captain and ambassador, while two of them,<sup>57</sup> although mentioning only G. Morosini and G. Querini, also counts three ambassadors.

51 M 37; Co 1499; Co 1013; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; M 2548; M 2549; M 2556; Ci 2113; Contarini D.; M 104; M 796; Vitturi; Ci 2116; Ci 2413; M 2559; ASV 59; Co 1337; F 6147; ASV 61; Sanudo; DDR 121; M 550; M 788; Antonio; PD 482c; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 2544 (the ambassadors' names are only on the margin of the text); M 51; Gussoni; M 2576; Rosso; M 2543; Ci 2123; Rotta; M 555; Ci 1982 bis; Ci 1900; M 322; Abbiosi; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; Ci 1898; PD 312c; Ci 3712; pseudo-Erizzo; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 513; M 39; Veniera 1568; MG 327; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; PD 378c; Veniera 791; Savina; M 2550; M 2046; Co 1421; Ci 2234; Lio; Morosini P.; M 2395; M 2669; M 43; M 44; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Contarini M.; M 66 bis; Co 1456; Dinarelli; M 64; F 6566; Veniera 2302.

52 M 104; Antonio; Ci 1900; Abbiosi.

53 Caresini 392c; M 2569; Ci 592; Co 1046; Co 760 bis; Cavalli; Zancaruolo; PD 236c; Ci 1982 bis; M 2568; M Z 21; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675.

54 Ci 3518; pseudo-Barbaro; M 2581; Diedo.

55 *Venetiarum Historia*; Caresini 392c; M 324 (with the note that it is about 4 galleys under Morosini's commandment); M 2546; Dolfin; M 2571; Magno 514; Tiepolo; Agostini; M 61; Sivos.

56 Querini; M 2564; M 2034; ASV 58; M 2566; Ci 1899; Ci 3599; M 45; Co 1045; M 2578; M 1586; M 327; F 6241; M 79.

57 Rosso; M 2543.

The number of three ambassadors could result as an interpretation of the misleading expression saying that *et fò mandado con quelle gallie 3 ambasciatori all'Imperatore* (according to M 1586), in which the numeral could refer to the number either of galleys or of ambassadors! As a singular case, chronicle M 47 refers to only one ambassador, which is the same with captain Marco Morosini. The absence of all three characters is registered in ten chronicles,<sup>58</sup> although almost all of them refer to a number of three ambassadors. The exceptions are Ci 3556–7, which mentions two ambassadors, and M 1X 28, Co 760 and Ci 1982, which do not mention any figure.

While there is no doubt about the name of Marco Morosini as captain, the names of the two ambassadors register a few differences, as follows. Thus, Giuffredo Morosini's first name becomes not only Onfredo in M 2581 and Savina, which could be a transcription of Gonfredo (used in WL 74–3)<sup>59</sup> or Marco Giuffredo<sup>60</sup> (thus combining the two members of the Morosinis in one particular character), but it also results in completely different first names. Thus, Giuffredo becomes Giusto,<sup>61</sup> Manfredo,<sup>62</sup> Giustiniano,<sup>63</sup> Niccolò.<sup>64</sup> As for three chronicles,<sup>65</sup> the entire character of Giuffredo Morosini is changed in Orso Giustinian. On his turn, the character of Giovanni Querini has either the first name<sup>66</sup> and the last name changed,<sup>67</sup> or even both of them.<sup>68</sup>

As for the case of chronicle M 324, another character appears, that is Giovanni Navagero, appointed as consul after the negotiations.

It is also interesting to note the title of the khan of the “pagans”, when the diplomatic mission is narrated. He is usually regarded as Emperor of either Gazaria (and similar names) in 57 chronicles (26.39%)<sup>69</sup> or Tartaria in 39 of

58 M 1X 28; Ci 3753; Co 760; M 2573; Ci 1982; M 53; Grandis; Valier; Ci 3556–7; Q 36.

59 Although in the case of Savina it is surprising that the copier replaced “Zu”—which was correct—with this “On”.

60 Querini; F 6241.

61 M 104; Ci 1900; M 66 bis.

62 Vitturi; M 44.

63 Sanudo; Antonio; Morosini P.; M 61; Diedo.

64 M 53; pseudo-A. Donato.

65 Tiepolo; Agostini; Sivos.

66 Giovanni becomes Leone (Dolfin) and Giacomo (Diedo).

67 Querini becomes Orsolin (M 2543), Contarini (M 555) and Giustinian (pseudo-A. Donato).

68 Niccolò Giustinian, according to PD 312c.

69 Co 1499; Querini; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; M 2548; M 2556; Contarini D.; M 2034; M 104; Ci 592; Vitturi (the form is “*Garizia*”); Ci 2116; M 2559; ASV 59; F 6147 (the form is “*Zarzanìa*”); ASV 61 (the form is “*Gazaian*”); Antonio; PD 482c; Co 760 bis; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 2544; Cavalli; M 51; PD 236c; Ci 2123; Rotta; M 555; Ci 1982 bis; Ci 1900; M 322; M 2568; M 47; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; M Z 21; Ci 1898 (“*Zarzunìa*”); Ci 3712; pseudo-*Erizzo*; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 513; Tiepolo; Agostini; Veniera 1568;

them (that is, 18.06%),<sup>70</sup> but also—to an almost similar extent (31, that is 14.35%)—Emperor of the Greeks!<sup>71</sup> At first sight, this latter version sounds surprising, but it should not be considered like that. For the Venetian chroniclers, Greece represented a more palpable political entity than the exotic denomination of *Gazaria*. It was also enough for one chronicler to insert such a mistake and others copied from him without discerning. Another explanation could be the fact that at the same times and in the context of the events in Tana, according to Monaci, a perpetual peace is signed with Byzantium,<sup>72</sup> although such a treaty is not attested by any other source in 1347–1348, but only in 1349.<sup>73</sup> The Hungarian Kingdom was another palpable political factor for the Venetians, so that there are two cases in which the one that ruled over Tana was even Emperor of Hungary!<sup>74</sup> Beside these versions, five chronicles just use the title of emperor, without any political determination.<sup>75</sup> As for the character of the Khan, Djanibeg at those times (1341–1357), his name is present only in Monaci (*Canibeth Principem Tartarorum*; then, speaking about *fracta fide Usbecho Tartaro, & Imperatori Constantinopolitano*, probably a reference to Uzbek Khan, who had ruled previously the Golden Horde, 1313–1341);

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pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; Veniera 791; Savina; M 2578; M 327; Co 1421; Lio; M 2395; M 2669; Co 1456; Sivos; F 6566; Veniera 2302.

70 Geographical determination (“of Tartaria”) in: M 2549; Ci 2413; M 2546 (regarded as king, not as emperor); M 2571; Rosso; Abbiosi; PD 312c; M 39; M 2581; MG 327; M 2046; Ci 2234; M 43; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Dinarelli.

Ethnical determination (“of the Tatars”) in: *Venetiarum Historia*; M 2545; Caresini 392c; Monaci; Sanudo; M 324 (the form is *limperador dela Zerchasia signor de Tartarj, il qual dimoraua la Tana*); M 2546; Dolfin; PD 380c; M 2571; Caroldo; pseudo-Barbaro; pseudo-Erizzo; Magno 514; M 2581; Tiepolo; Agostini; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; Ci 3556–7 (only as king!); Morosini P. (only as king!); M 43; M 61 (only as king!); Sivos; M 64; Diedo (only as king!), or “the Tartar” (M 796).

71 Geographical determination (“of Greece”) in: M 37; Co 1013; Ci 2113; M 2564; M 2569; M 2566; Co 1337; M 788; Co 1046; Ci 1899; Gussoni; M 2576 (“*al Re de Grecia, immo al Imperador de Grecia*”); M 45; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675; F 6241; M 44; Contarini M.; M 79 or even “of Constantinople”, in ASV 58; Ci 3753; Sanudo (but giving this version only as a hypothesis: *Altri scrivono che la Tana era sotto l'Imperadore di Costantinopoli, [...]*); M 788; M 2573; Ci 3599; M 53; Grandis; Valier; Q 36.

Ethnical determination (“of the Greeks”) in M 2569 (on the margin of the text); Ci 3518; M 550; M 66 bis.

72 Monaci, 208 (*Nam ne cederent juri praedicto cum Graecorum Imperatore pace perpetua de tempora in tempus treuguas inierunt.*).

73 Cf. *Acta et Diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, ed. by F. Miklosich & J. Müller, 111, (Vienna, 1860), pp. 114–120; *Diplomatarium* cit., I, n. 171, 341–345; see also F. Thiriet, *Regestes des deliberations du Sénat de Venise* cit., I, n. 231.

74 M 2543; M 1586.

75 DDR 121; Zancaruolo; Co 1045; PD 378c (with a lacuna in the text); M 2550.

PD 380c (*Iambech Imperator de Tartari*); Caroldo (*Iambech Imperator di Tartari*); Tiepolo (*signor Zaibel Imperator di Ganzara, & signor di Tartari*); Agostini (*Signor Zaibel Imperator di Ganzara, et Signor di Tartari*); pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815 (*Zamber Principe de Tartari*); Sivos (*Zabiel Imperator de Gazar[i]a [sic], et signor de Tartari*).

The “pagans” involved in the events have various names: Tatars (70 texts, that is 32.41%),<sup>76</sup> Saracens (20, meaning 9.26%)<sup>77</sup> (the formula *un de quei Sarayini* leads to the impression that the Saracens were the main inhabitants in Tana!) and, in exceptional cases, Scythians<sup>78</sup> or Moors.<sup>79</sup> They also appear under the formula “Saracens & Tatars” in ten cases,<sup>80</sup> thus making a distinction between the two ethnical entities, and even *tutj i Saraxinj de compagnia con Morj* (M 324) or *essi Saraini et Morj se lego a uno* (M 2568 bis). From this variety of denominations (the negotiations with the “Emperor of Greece” along with the reconciliation with the Tatars), a strange changing could result in the international political affairs, meaning the involvement of Byzantium in the affairs of the Tatars or even the latter’s subdue to Byzantium! It is the case for Ci 2113, Ci 3518, Co 1337, M 550, M 788, M 2576, M 66 bis.

Although in a small number, one should also note the depreciatory formulae, as follows: *quidam arrogantissimus Sitha, sive Tartarus*,<sup>81</sup> *ab immanissimo Tartaro*,<sup>82</sup> *barbari*,<sup>83</sup> *dettj chanj*.<sup>84</sup>

76 Co 1499; Caresini 392c; Filippo 18; Filippo 1120; M 2549; Monaci; M 2556; M IX 28; Ci 2113; Contarini D.; M 104; Ci 3518; Vitturi; Ci 2116; Ci 2413; ASV 59; Co 1337; F 6147; ASV 61; DDR 121; M 550; M 788; Antonio; Dolfin; PD 482c; Co 760; WL 74–3; Pigno; M 2576; Rosso; Ci 2123; Rotta; Ci 1982; Ci 1900; M 322; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275; Ci 1898; PD 312c; Ci 3712; Balanzana; Veniera 2580; Ci 3725; Magno 513; M 39 (a copier’s error replaces *Tartari* with *tractatj!*); Tiepolo; Agostini; Veniera 1568; MG 327; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815; PD 378c; Veniera 791; Savina; M 2550; M 2046; Co 1421; Ci 2234; Lio; M 2395; M 2669; M 44; pseudo-A. Donato; M 54; Contarini M.; M 66 bis; Co 1456; Sivos; Dinarelli; M 64; F 6566; Veniera 2302.

77 Pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; M 2545; F 6117; M 796; Gr 53; M 324; M 2546; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; M 2571; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2567; M 2581; pseudo-Trevisan 519; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Astori.

78 Monaci (when saying *quidam arrogantissimus Sitha, sive Tartarus*), but also those chronicles in *terza rima* (M IX 28; Co 760; Ci 1982) use at a certain moment the formula *Con Tartarj e con Zichi*.

79 Only in Savina.

80 *Venetiarum Historia*; M 2545; Caresini 392c; Monaci (*ab incursibus Saracenorum, Maurorum, & Barbarorum*); F 6117; M 2546; Dolfin; M 2571 (*tutj i Saraini et Tartarj che demoraua in la Tana*); Magno 514; M 2581 (*tutti i Saraini et Tartarj che demoraua in la Tana*).

81 Monaci, repeated in pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815 as “*uno certo arrogantissimo Tartaro*”.

82 Monaci.

83 M 324; M 61; Diedo.

84 M 2571; M 2581.

A part of the chronicles (25) puts the *rotta della Tana* in direct connection with the matter of the Venetian trade with Egypt.<sup>85</sup> Thus, according to a part of them (17),<sup>86</sup> the *rotta* would have led to the end of the commercial activity with both Tana and Alexandria, as if the two trading points would have been under the same rule! Here is the idea as it is presented by M 37: [...] *si che nauegar non se potte jn quele partte ne jnn Alesandria per annj 5* [...] On the contrary, the remaining eight texts<sup>87</sup> advance the idea that, because of the ceasing of trade in Tana, the commercial activity would have been redirected towards Alexandria. As chronicle M 324 notes, *Et abiando Venitiani per dita chaxon perso el uiazo dela Tana del 1344 delibero la Signoria nostra far achordo con el Soldan del Chairo*, while M 2546 (along with M 2571 and M 2581), following the same idea, also inserts Cyprus on the list of Venetian commercial priorities: *Considerando lj Uenezianj puo non poter nauegar altro cha jn Zipro manda al Cairo al Soldan de Babilonia* [...]. Therefore, they pass to the mission of Niccolò Zeno in Egypt, sent to the Sultan of “Babylonia” to adjust the misunderstandings.

The negotiations are thus transferred towards “*il Soldano*”, who is regarded as the one whom the Venetians make an appeal to. For those years, it was the Mamluk sultan in Cairo to be regarded under this general name. It is a proof that those chroniclers that follow such a manner of describing the facts regard the Muslims as a whole, making no difference between the Golden Horde and the Mamluk Sultanate and considering that the events in Tana would have been able to influence the trade with Egypt.



According to the Venetian chronicles’ manner of representing the events, the dogeship of Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354) has usually three events as starting point, all of them connected with the East. These three events are presented like a cluster of episodes. It is about the crusade to Smyrna in 1344,<sup>88</sup> the *rotta*

85 M 37; pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; M 796; pseudo-Dolfín; Gr 53; M 324; M 2546; Dolfín; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; M 2571; M 2573; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2567; M 53; Grandis; Magno 514; M 2581; Savina; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Veniera 2302.

There are also the singular cases of M 1662, Laugier and M 1669, which, ignoring the events in Tana, make direct connections between the crusade of Smyrna and the event of the trade in Alexandria.

86 M 37; pseudo-Dandolo; Morosini A.; M 796; pseudo-Dolfín; Gr 53; Dolfín; pseudo-Dandolo 873; F 3458; Ci 589; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; M 2567; Savina; M 91–3; Vitaliani; pseudo-Dandolo 102; Astori.

87 M 324; M 2546; M 2571; M 2573; M 53; Grandis; Magno 514; M 2581.

88 *Venetiarum Historia*, 225–226; M 37, 50a–50b; Co 1499, 26a, col. 1–26a, col. 2; pseudo-Dandolo, 122; Morosini A., 60; M 2545, 78b, col. 1–78b, col. 2; Caresini 392c, 20a, col. 2–20b,

*della Tana* in 1343 (however, placed after the “crusade” by the chronicles, probably due to the positive effect of presenting first and foremost a crusading event for a dogeship) and the beginnings of the Venetian trade in Alexandria

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col. 1; Co 1013, [94b]–[95a]; Querini, 46a–46b; Filippo 18, 83b, col. 1–83b, col. 2; Filippo 1120, [78a, col. 2]–[79a, col. 1]; M 2548, 24a, col. 2; M 2549, 32b, col. 2–33a, col. 1; Monaci, 92; M 2556, [82]–83; M IX 28 bis, 132b; Ci 2113, 36a; M 2564, 100b; M 2569, 65a; Contarini D., 96a, col. 2–96b, col. 1; M 2034, 213a, col. 1–213a, col. 2; F 6117, 77a, col. 2–77b, col. 1; M 104, 88a; M 2563, 19a; M 38, 33a, col. 1–33a, col. 2; Ci 3518, 99a; M Z 20, 77a–77b; Ci 592, 74a–74b; M 796, 106a–106b; pseudo-Dolfin, 74b–75a; Vitturi, 42b, col. 2–43a, col. 1; Ci 2116, 39b, col. 2–40a, col. 2; Ci 2413, [59a]–[59b]; M 2559, 33, col. 2 [=32b, col. 2]–33a, col. 2; Gr 53, 22b, col. 2–23a, col. 1; ASV 59, 55b; ASV 58, 131b–132a; M 2566, 35a–35b; Co 1337, 95b; F 6147, 153a–153b; Ci 3753, 139a, col. 2–139b, col. 2; Sabellico, 294; ASV 61, 35b; Sanudo, 610–611; M 324, 106b–107b; M 2546, [56b]–[57a]; DDR 121, 30a; M 541, 53b–54a; M 550, 93a–93b; M 788, 48a–48b; Antonio, 29a; Dolfin, 32b–33b; PD 482c, 56a–56b; Co 1046, 24a, col. 2; Co 760, 36b, col. 1–37a, col. 1; Co 760 bis, 127a–127b; Ci 1899, 74a; WL 74–3, 92b; PD 380c, fasc. 1, 1a; pseudo-Dandolo 873, 112b, col. 1–112b, col. 2; Pigno, 197b–198a; M 2544, 55a, col. 2–55b, col. 1; F 3458, 79b–80a; Ci 589, 72a; Cavalli, 74b; M 51, 110b, col. 1–110b, col. 2; M 2555, 27b–28a; Zancaruolo, 38a–38b; Gussoni, 22–23; PD 236c, 84b–85a; F 6234, 65a; M 46, 42b–43a; M 2571, 198b–199b; M 2576, 40a–40b; M 2573, 152b–153a; Caroldo, 7–8; Rosso, 49a–49b; M 2543, 84b–85a; MG 249, 68b; Ci 2123, 93a–93b; Rotta, 21b; M 555, 52b, col. 2–53a, col. 2; pseudo-Barbaro, 245a–245b; Ci 1982, 39a, col. 2–39b, col. 1; Ci 1982 bis, 132a–132b; M 1662, [3b]–[4a]; Ci 1983, 36b; Ci 1900, [41b]–[42a]; M 322, 77b; pseudo-Trevisan 1327, 71a; Ci 3599, 105b; Abbiosi, 32b; M 45, 63a; M 2569, 39b; M 2568 bis, 224b; M 2567, 69a, col. 1–69a, col. 2; M 47, 45b, col. 2–46a, col. 1; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275, cclxxxv b–cclxxxvj a; M Z 21, 27b–28a; Ci 1898, [165b]–[166a]; M 53, 164a; PD 312c, 52b; Ci 3712, 126b; pseudo-Erizzo, 75a; pseudo-Navagero, 1031–1032; F 6211, 83b–84b; M 60, 45b; Ci 2754, 54b–55a; Co 1045, 75b; Grandis, 173b–174a; pseudo-I. Donato, 101a (although only as a brief description on the margin of the text); Ci 351, 70b (although speaking only about a “rebellion” of the Saracens); Balanzana, 83b; Veniera 2580, 156a; Ci 3725, 84b; Magno 513, 89b–90a; Magno 514, 132a–133a; Valier, 172b–173a; M 39, 43a; M 2581, 166a–166b; Tiepolo, 298–299; Agostini, 53b; Giustinian, 68b–69a; Veniera 1568, 168b; MG 327, 362; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 180a–180b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675, LVIII b–LIX a; PD 378c, 59b–60a; PD 391c, [78b]–[79a]; Veniera 791, 77b; pseudo-Trevisan 519, 101b, col. 1; Savina, 122b–123a; M 793, 88a; M 2578, 4b; M 393, [39b]; Doglioni, 208–209; M 31, 146b; Ci 3556–7, 25b; M 1586, 66a; M 58, 57a; M 327, 88b; M 2550, 101a–101b; F 6821, 100a; Co 1305, 56b–57a; Ci 590, 62a; M 2046, 150a; M 59, 57b–58a; M 91–3, 626a; Co 1032, 79b; Co 1421, 129b–130a; Fougasses, 142a; Alario, 107b; Vitaliani, 48b; Ci 2234, 425; Lio, 144a–144b; Morosini P., 237–238; F 6241, 59a–59b; M 2395, 179b–180a; Contarena, 57b–58b; M 2669, 147b–148a; M 43, 77a–77b; M 44, 49a; pseudo-A. Donato, 49b; M 54, 215a–215b; Contarini M., 48b–49a; M 70, [59b]; M 75, 62a; pseudo-Dandolo 102, 69b–70a; Vianoli, 407; Verdizzotti, 243–245; M 61, libro 10, 41–44; M 66 bis, 101a; Co 1456, 151a–151b; Sivos, 139a–139b; M 1999, 47b (although placed under the dogeship of Francesco Dandolo!); M 79, 50b; Q 36, 155a, col. 2–155b, col. 1; Dinarelli, 30b–31a; M 64, 256b–257a; F 6566, 57a–57b; Diedo, 128; M 1833, 48b–49a; Laugier, 398–415; Veniera 2302, 141–142; M 1669, 574–575; Astori, 160–161.

in 1344.<sup>89</sup> This order of the three events (first, Smyrna; then, Tana; and at last, Alexandria), without any insertion of any other event between them is followed by a number of 131 chronicles, meaning a percentage of 60.65%.<sup>90</sup> Besides,

- 89 *Venetiarum Historia*, 226–227; M 37, 50b; Co 1499, 26b, col. 1; pseudo-Dandolo, 123; Morosini A., 61; M 2545, 79a, col. 1–79a, col. 2; Caresini 392c, 20b, col. 1; Co 1013, [95b]–[96b]; Querini, 46b; Filippo 18, 83b, col. 2–84a, col. 1; Filippo 1120, [79a, col. 2]–[79b, col. 2]; M 2548, 24b, col. 1; M 2549, 33a, col. 1; Monaci, 311; M 2556, 83; M IX 28, 46b, col. 2; Ci 2113, 36b; M 2564, 101a; M 2569, 65b; Contarini D., 96b, col. 2; M 2034, 213b, col. 1–213b, col. 2; F 6117, 77b, col. 2; M 104, 88a–88b; M 2563, 19a; M Z 20, 77b; M 2565, 57a; Ci 592, 74b–75a; M 796, 106b; pseudo-Dolfín, 75a–75b; Vitturi, 43a, col. 1–43a, col. 2; Ci 2116, 40a, col. 2; Ci 2413, [59b]; M 2559, 33a, col. 2–34, col. 1 [=33b, col. 1]; Gr 53, 23a, col. 1; ASV 59, 55b; ASV 58, 132a; M 2566, 35b; Co 1337, 95b; F 6147, 153b; Ci 3753, 139b, col. 2; Sabellico, 294; ASV 61, 35b–36a; Sanudo, 611; M 324, 108a; M 2546, [57a]; DDR 121, 30b; M 541, 54a; M 550, 93b; M 788, 48b–49a; Antonio, 29a; Dolfín, 33b–34a; PD 482c, 56b–57a; Co 1046, 24a, col. 2–24b, col. 1; Co 760, 37a, col. 1–37a, col. 2; Co 760 bis, 127b; Ci 1899, 74a; WL 74–3, 93a; PD 380c, fasc. 1, 1b; pseudo-Dandolo 873, 113a, col. 1; Pigno, 198a; M 2544, 55b, col. 1; F 3458, 80a–80b; Ci 589, 72b; M 798, xxx a; Cavalli, 74b–75a; M 51, 110b, col. 2; Marcello, [61]; Zancaruolo, 38b; Gussoni, 23; PD 236c, 85a; M 46, 43a; M 2571, 200a–200b; M 2576, 40b; M 2573, 153a–153b; Caroldo, 10; Rosso, 49b–50a; M 2543, 85a; MG 249, 68b; Ci 2123, 93b; Rotta, 21b–22a; M 555, 53a, col. 2–53b, col. 1; pseudo-Barbaro, 245a; Ci 1982, 39b, col. 1–39b, col. 2; Ci 1982 bis, 132b; M 1662, [4a]; Ci 1983, 36b; Ci 1900, [42a]; M 2037, 195b–196a; M 322, 77b–78a; pseudo-Trevisan 1327, 71b; Ci 3599, 106a; Abbiosi, 32b; M 45, 63a–63b; M 2568, 39b; M 2568 bis, 225a; M 2567, 69b, col. 1; M 47, 46a, col. 1–46a, col. 2; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275, cclxxxvj a; M Z 21, 28a; Ci 1898, [166a]; M 628a, 105b–106a; M 53, 164a–164b; PD 312c, 52b–53a; Ci 3712, 126b; pseudo-Erizzo, 75b; Co 1045, 76a; Grandis, 174a; Balanzana, 83b; Veniera 2580, 156a; Ci 3725, 85a; Magno 513, 90a; Magno 514, 133b; Valier, 173a–173b; M 39, 43b; M 2581, 166b–167a; Tiepolo, 312–313; Giustinian, 78a; Veniera 1568, 169a; MG 327, 362–363; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 180b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675, LIX a; PD 378c, 60a; Veniera 791, 77b; pseudo-Trevisan 519, 101b, col. 2; Savina, 123a–123b; M 793, 88a; M 2578, 5a; M 393, [40a]; Doglioni, 209; M XI 77, 39b [=26b]; M 31, 146b–147a; Ci 3556–7, 25b–26a; M 1586, 66b; Albergno, 118b; M 327, 88b–89a; F 6821, 100a; Co 1305, 57a; Ci 590, 62a; M 2046, 150a; pseudo-Alberga, 373b; M 91–3, 626a; Co 1032, 79b; Co 1421, 130a; Fougasses, 142a–142b; Alario, 107b; Vitaliani, 48b–49a; Ci 2234, 425; Lio, 145a; Morosini P., 239–240; F 6241, 59b; M 2395, 180a; M 2669, 148a; M 43, 77b; M 44, 49b; pseudo-A. Donato, 49b–50a; M 54, 216a–216b; Contarini M., 49b; M 80, 117b; M 70, [59b]; M 75, 62a–62b; pseudo-Dandolo 102, 70a; Vianoli, 407–411; M 61, libro 10, 44–45; M 66 bis, 101b; Co 1456, 151b; Sivos, 140b; M 1999, 50b–51a; Falier, 294–295; M 79, 51a; Q 36, 155b, col. 1–155b, col. 2; Dinarelli, 31a; M 64, 257a; F 6566, 57b; Diedo, 129; M 1833, 49a–49b; Laugier, 415–418; Veniera 2302, 142; M 1669, 575; Astori, 162.
- 90 *Venetiarum Historia*, 225–227; M 37, 50a–50b; Co 1499, 26a, col. 1–26b, col. 1; pseudo-Dandolo, 122–123; Morosini A., 60–61; M 2545, 78b, col. 1–79a, col. 2; Caresini 392c, 20a, col. 2–20b, col. 1; Co 1013, [94b]–[96a]; Querini, 46a–46b; Filippo 18, 83b, col. 1–84a, col. 1; Filippo 1120, [78b, col. 2]–[79b, col. 2]; M 2548, 24a, col. 2–24b, col. 1; M 2549, 32b, col. 2–33a, col. 1; M 2556, [82]–83; Ci 2113, 36a–36b; M 2564, 100b–101a; M 2569, 65a–65b; Contarini D., 96a, col. 2–96b, col. 2; M 2034, 213a, col. 1–213b, col. 2; F 6117, 77a, col. 2–77b, col. 2; M 104, 88a–88b; M Z 20, 77a–77b; Ci 592, 74a–75a; M 796, 106a–106b; pseudo-Dolfín, 74b–75b; Vitturi, 42b, col. 2–43a, col. 2; Ci 2116, 39b, col. 2–40a, col. 2; Ci 2413, [59a]–[59b];



additional information related to the three episodes is delivered later in the narration, during the dogeship of the same Andrea Dandolo.<sup>91</sup>

Despite this tendency in presenting the succession of the three events as a cluster, one could note some exceptions. Beside the case of the chronicle Sanudo, which places the event at Tana only after the beginnings of the trade in Alexandria, and the one of pseudo-Barbaro, which inserts the trade with Egypt previous to the other two events, there are situations that ignore the

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M 2559, 33, col. 2 [=32b, col. 2]-34, col. 1 [=33b, col. 1]; Gr 53, 22b, col. 2-23a, col. 1; ASV 59, 55b; ASV 58, 131b-132a; M 2566, 35a-35b; Co 1337, 95b; F 6147, 153a-153b; Ci 3753, 139a, col. 1-139b, col. 2; ASV 61, 35b-36a; M 2546, [56b]-[57a]; DDR 121, 30a-30b; M 541, 53b-54a; M 550, 93a-93b; M 788, 48a-49a; Antonio, 29a; Dolfín, 32b-33b; PD 482c, 56a-57a; Co 1046, 24a, col. 2-24b, col. 1; Co 760, 36b, col. 1-37a, col. 2; Co 760 bis, 127a-127b; Ci 1899, 74a; WL 74-3, 92b-93a; pseudo-Dandolo 873, 112b, col. 1-113a, col. 1; Pigno, 197b-198a; M 2544, 55a, col. 2-55b, col. 1; F 3458, 79b-80b; Ci 589, 72a-72b; Cavalli, 74b-75a; M 51, 110b, col. 1-110b, col. 2; Zancaruolo, 38a-38b; Gussoni, 22-23; PD 236c, 84b-85a; M 2571, 198b-200b; M 2576, 40a-40b; M 2573, 152b-153b; Rosso, 49a-50a; M 2543; 84b-85a; Ci 2123, 93a-93b; Rotta, 21b-22a; M 555, 52b, col. 2-53b, col. 1; Ci 1982, 39a, col. 2-39b, col. 2; Ci 1982 bis, 132a-132b; Ci 1900, [41b]-[42a]; M 322, 77b-78a; Ci 3599, 105b-106a; Abbiosi, 32b; M 45, 63a-63b; M 2568, 39b; M 2568 bis, 224b-225a; M 2567, 69a, col. 1-69b, col. 1; M 47, 45b, col. 2-46a, col. 2; pseudo-Zancaruolo 1275, cclxxxv b-cclxxxvj a; M Z 21, 27b-28a; Ci 1898, [165b]-[166a]; M 53, 164a-164b; PD 312c, 52b-53a; Ci 3712, 126b; pseudo-Erizzo, 75a-75b; Co 1045, 75b-76a; Grandis, 173b-174a; Balanzana, 83b; Veniera 2580, 156a; Ci 3725, 84b-85a; Magno 513, 89b-90a; Magno 514, 132a-133b; Valier, 172b-173b; M 39, 43a-43b; M 2581, 166a-167a; Veniera 1568, 168b-169a; MG 327, 362-363; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 180a-180b; pseudo-Zancaruolo 3675, LVIII b-LIX a; PD 378c, 59b-60a; Veniera 791, 77b; M 2578, 4b-5a (although, inside of the narration of the crusade at Smyrna, the chronicler inserts a presentation of the siege of Zara); M 1586, 66a-66b; M 327, 88b-89a; Ci 590, 62a; M 2046, 150a; M 91-3, 626a; Co 1421, 129b-130a; Vitaliani, 48b-49a; Ci 2234, 425; F 6241, 59a-59b; M 2395, 179b-180a; M 2669; 147b-148a; M 43, 77a-77b; M 44, 49a-49b; pseudo-A. Donato, 49b-50a; M 54, 215a-216b; Contarini M., 48b-49b; pseudo-Dandolo 102, 69b-70a; M 61, libro 10, 41-45; M 66 bis, 101a-101b; Co 1456, 151a-151b; M 79, 50b-51a; Q 36, 155a, col. 2-155b, col. 2; Dinarelli, 30b-31a; M 64, 256b-257a; F 6566, 57a-57b; Diedo, 128-129 (with the note that the reference to Tana does not deal with the “rotta”, but only with Morosini’s mission); Veniera 2302, 141-142; Astori, 160-162.

91 Additional references to the crusade at Smyrna: M 796, 107a; PD 380c, fasc. 1, 1b; Magno 514, 136b.

Additional references to the trade at Tana (as mentioned previously): *Venetiarum Historia*, 229; M 37, 50b; M 2545, 79a, col. 2; Caresini 392c, 20b, col. 1-20b, col. 2; Ci 3518, 100a; M 796, 107a; M 324, 108a; M 2546, [57a], [58a]; Dolfín, 34a, 34a, 38a-38b; M 2571, 200b, 204a; Magno 514, 136a; M 2581, 167a, 169a; Tiepolo, 308-309; pseudo-Zancaruolo 2815, 191a-191b.

Additional references to the trade at Alexandria: M 37, 50b; Filippo 1120, [80a, col. 1]; Ci 2116, 40b, col. 1; M 324, 108a-108b; M 555, 53b, col. 2; pseudo-Erizzo, 75b; Magno 513, 90b; pseudo-Trevisan 519, 102a, col. 1; Contarini M., 50a.

Surprisingly, references to the previous “crusade” under Doge Francesco Dandolo (1328-1339): M 2563, 19b; Co 1305, 57a.

presentation of either all three episodes (21 chronicles),<sup>92</sup> or only two of them: Smyrna and Tana (four chronicles)<sup>93</sup> or Tana and Alexandria (16 narrative sources).<sup>94</sup> In other cases, it is only one episode to be absent, either only the crusade against Smyrna (six chronicles),<sup>95</sup> or only the trade in Alexandria (three),<sup>96</sup> or—what interests mostly the present topic—only the *rotta della Tana* (according to 22 chronicles).<sup>97</sup> However, as we mentioned already, all these represent nothing but exceptions, the basic rule being that all these three episodes are present as a cluster. Despite the few particular cases, which insert other events between the three episodes—either between the events at Smyrna and Tana,<sup>98</sup> or between Tana and Alexandria,<sup>99</sup> their succession is not interrupted by other events, seeming thus that they result one from another.

All in all, we note the following percentages of the presence in the chronicles of the three events that compose this cluster: 86.11% for Smyrna, 82.87% for Alexandria and, as we mentioned already, 71.30% for Tana. As a result of these percentages, one could conclude that a defeat like the *rotta della Tana* was less important for the Venetian chroniclers than a crusading event and the one dealing with the commercial activity. However, in comparison with other disasters, the one which occurred in 1343 is much better represented, perhaps especially due to the fact that a new trade treaty with the Tatars in Golden Horde was immediately concluded, so that usually it is inserted in the text of the chronicles.

### Abbreviations for the Venetian Chronicles

Abbiosi            Camilo Abbiosi detto il Seniore di Ravenna, *Cronaca di Venezia dall'origine della Città fino all'anno 1443*, Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, manuscript It. VII, 2052 [= 8981], 1a–149b, 16th c. codex.

92 M 89; M 2560; M 52; ASV 60; Q 15; Cornaro; M 728 bis; M 87; Sansovino; M 303; M 67; Co 1307; M 2541; M 2572; F 6166; M 583; Co 1306; M 2602; pseudo-Barba; M 1577; M 2028.

93 Marcello; M XI 77; M 80; Falier.

94 M IX 28 bis; M 38; M 2555; F 6234; pseudo-Navagero; F 6211; M 60; Ci 2754; pseudo-T. Donato; Ci 351; PD 391c; M 58; M 59; Contarena; Verdizzotti.

95 M IX 28; M 2565; M 2037; M 628a; Alberegno; pseudo-Alberegno.

96 M 1662; Agostini; M 2550.

97 M 2563; Sabellico; M 46; MG 249; Ci 1983; Giustinian; M 793; M 393; Doglioni; M 31; F 6821; Co 1305; Co 1032; Fougasses; Alario; M 70; M 75; Vianoli; M 1999; Diedo; M 1833; Laugier.

98 Monaci; Ci 3518; M 324; Caroldo; pseudo-Barbaro; pseudo-Trevisan 1327; Tiepolo; Agostini; Savina; Ci 3556–7; Lio; Morosini P.; Sivos.

99 Monaci; M IX 28; Tiepolo; pseudo-Trevisan 519; Lio; Sivos.

- Agostini Agostino Agostini, *Storia veneziana di Agostino Agostini dal principio della fondazione di Venezia (421) fino all'anno 1570*, Venice, Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, manuscript IV, 16 [= 770], 1a–309a, 16th c. codex.
- Alario Enea Alario, *Cronaca di Venezia*, Venice, Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, manuscript IV, 63 [= 776], 84a–150b, codex dated in year 1617.
- Alberegno Michele Alberegno, *Cronaca veneta*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 273 [= 2569], 2b–142a, codex dated in 1576–1625.
- Antonio Antonio di Matteo di Curato, *Cronaca Veneta*, Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, manuscript It. VII, 162 [= 8037], 1a–176b, 15th–16th c. codex.
- Astori Giovanni Battista Astori, *Cronicha*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 3424 [= 2832], 3–233, codex dated in 1837.
- ASV 58 Anon., *Cronaca veneziana*, Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Storia Veneta 57 (*olim* Codd. Brera 50), 85a–192b, codex dated at the end of the 15th c.
- ASV 59 Anon., *Cronaca veneziana*, Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Storia Veneta 59 (*olim* 940), 1a–215a, 15th c. codex.
- ASV 60 Anon., *Sommario di Cronaca. Repertorio della Chronica Veneziana di Marin Sanudo. Notizie sino al 1487*, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Storia Veneta 60 (*olim* Austria), 1a–35b, 15th–16th c. codex.
- ASV 61 *Cronaca Veneta*, Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Storia Veneta 61 (*olim* Restituito dall'Austria), 1a–140a, codex dated at the end of the 15th c.
- Balanzana Anon., *Cronaca Veneziana dalla fondazione della Città fino al 1555*, Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, manuscript It. VII, 68 [= 8317], 4a–196b, 16th c. codex.
- Caresini 392c Raffaino Caresini, *Cronaca veneziana*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Provenienze Diverse, manuscript 392c, 1a–55a, 14th–15th c. codex.
- Caroldo Giovanni Giacomo Caroldo, *Istorie venețiene*, (ed. by Șerban V. Marin), III, Bucharest, 2010.
- Cavalli Bernardino Cavalli, *Cronaca Veneta dall'origine della Città fino al 1446*, Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, manuscript It. VII, 48 [= 7143], [1a]–222a, 16th c. codex.
- Ci 351 Anon., *Cronaca veneziana*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 2642 [= 351], 1a–92a, 16th c. codex.

- Ci 589 Anon., *Cronaca veneta*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 259 [= 589], 1a–[141b], 16th c. codex.
- Ci 590 Anon., *Cronaca veneta*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 260 [= 590], 1a–143a, codex dated in 1576–1625.
- Ci 592 Anon., *Cronaca veneziana*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 2606 [= 592], 1a–295a, 15th c. codex.
- Ci 1898 Anon., *Cronaca veneta*, Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr, fonds Cicogna, manuscript 285 [= 1898], 1a–337a, 16th c. codex.
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# The Timurids and the Black Sea

*Nagy Pienaru*

At the middle of the penultimate decade of the 14th century, a new player emerged on the political scene of the powers fighting both on land and sea for the domination of sections of the Black Sea coast: the state of Timur Lenk (1370–1405), founded in Central Asia. The diachrony of the direct and multilevel involvement of the Timurids in the Black Sea consists of two distinct stages: the ascension, during the lifetime of the founder of the Timurid Empire, and the progressive decline, during the reign of Shah Rukh (1409–1447).

## 1 Timur Lenk and the Black Sea

The expansion towards the West promoted by the Tatar conqueror didn't involve the control of a segment of the Black Sea coast, but the political supremacy over the Golden Horde, the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt, as a preliminary stage of his ambitious project to become an Islamic world power through the conquest of China.

The establishment of Timurid domination over the South-eastern corner of the Black Sea, in the area of modern Azerbaijan, took place in time. After taking almost full control of Persia, following the campaign known as “the three-year expedition” (1386–1388)<sup>1</sup> in the Persian literary sources, Timur pursued his enemy, Ahmed Celayir (1382–1410), entered in Azerbaijan and peacefully occupied Tabriz, a commercial centre that was no longer the main trade hub between the East and the West and supplier of the Black Sea ports. A year before, during the winter of 1385/1386, Timur's rival, Tokhtamysh (1380–1405), probably aware of the intentions concerning Azerbaijan of the ruler of Samarkand, led a raid against Tabriz through the Pass of Derbent—the single accessible pass from the Eastern Black Sea—and Shirvan. Although the inhabitants of the city paid the ransom tax (*mal-i aman*), the khan from the Northern Black

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1 *Histoire des Conquêtes de Tamerlan intitulée Zafarnāma par Nizāmuddin Sami. Avec des additions empruntées au Zubdatu-t-Tawarih-i-Baysunguri de Hafiz-i Abru*, 1. Texte persan du *Zafarnāma*, ed. F. Tauer, (Prague, 1937), pp. 99–101. (Henceforth *Zafarnāma*).

Sea ignored the agreement, pillaged and destroyed the city, retreating with his rich spoils shortly before the first arrival of Timur Lenk in the area.<sup>2</sup>

Arriving as a liberator and protector, Timur introduced the Timurid administration in Azerbaijan. This new province became the cornerstone of the Timurid policy in the Black Sea. This position was determined by Azerbaijan's strategic position, as a base for an invasion in three major directions: to the North, towards the shortest route into the Golden Horde; to the West, towards Asia Minor; to the Southwest, allowing a quick intervention into Syria, the main province of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. The conquest of Azerbaijan solved a vital problem for the movement of the steppe raiders: forage for the horses. Unlike the arid high plateau of Persia, the warm climate and green pastures of the Karabakh region allowed the encampment of the Timurid troops during winter. The control over the posts next to the winter and summer pastures (in Karabakh and Aladağ)—essential for the survival of the nomad Turkoman herders—made the Kara Koyunlu confederation the most stable and perseverant adversary of the Timurid presence in Azerbaijan.

The presence and closeness of the link between Persia and Azerbaijan during the Timurid era can be observed from the epistolary correspondence between the two rival princes, Miran Shah and Shah Rukh, who were fighting for the throne in Samarkand after the death of Timur Lenk. In the letter sent by Shah Rukh, ruler of Khorasan, to Miran Shah, ruler of Azerbaijan—written by the chronicler Tacü's-Selmani, a witness of the Timurid infighting—there is the phrase: "Azerbaijan is the light of the eyes of the country of Iran".<sup>3</sup> The same chronicler also remarked the economic dimension of the Western region of the Timurid state by stating that "the countries and regions that include Baylakan <a district in Eastern Azerbaijan, North of Aras river>, Berdaa <the island between the rivers Kür and Terter>, Gürcistan, Ermenyye and Tiflis up to the border of Trebizond (*Trabzon*) are the most prosperous territories on the face of the earth".<sup>4</sup>

Azerbaijan became a support point of the Timurid military system. The basic mechanism of this system is punctually revealed by a privilege—an order issued by prince Mehemmed Sultan Bahadur, who governed the province in Timur's name (*Timur Kürgen Sözüümü*), on 3 September 1401/24 *muharrem*

2 The chronicler Aziz b. Erdeşir-i Esterâbâdî, *Bezm u Rezm (Eğlence ve savaş)*, ed. M. Öztürk, (Ankara, 1990), p. 27 indicates the date of the attack on Tabriz as being the beginning of the month of *zilhicce 787*, i.e. the first decade of January 1386. According to Tokhtamysh's order, 10,000 of the city's inhabitants were killed, Muslim children were taken into slavery and no soul was left alive. The same source dates Timur's arrival 9 months after this massacre.

3 Tacü's-Selmânî, *Tarihname*, ed. Ismail Aka, (Ankara, 1988), p. 41.

4 *Ibid.* p. 42.

804, in Ucan (*be makam Ucan*), a city near Tabriz. The order was addressed to all the officials of the public and fiscal administration from the “country of Azerbaijan and the district <*tumen*> of Nahcivan” (*memalik Azerbaycan ve tumen Nahcivan*) and to the inhabitants of Marakan, Iv oğlu, Dara-I Samlik, Culah, Lalan dark, Mulard-i Ulya and Sufla and stipulated that certain taxes written down in the chancellery’s financial register were to be used for the acquisition of the full equipment (weapons and clothes) of 50 horsemen who were to be sent to the army, with 15 horses and 2 camels for 10 horsemen.<sup>5</sup> The meticulous and rigorous manner in which these incomes were registered, as well as the tax collection and spending procedures are clues pointing out towards the fact that the Timurid empire did not only took the Ilkhanate’s ideology, but also its financial system.

Timur’s programme to revive the Persian Ilkhanate in a new formula, legitimized by his status of imperial son-in-law (*Kürgen*) of Khan Suyurkatmîş,<sup>6</sup> reinvigorated the competition for Azerbaijan, first between the Chagatai Khanate and the Golden Horde. Tokhtamysh responded swiftly and crossed the Pass of Derbent again in the winter of 1386/1387, while Timur was encamped for the winter in Karabakh, but was halted at Shirvan, on the shore of the Samur River. Miran Shah (Timur’s son) defeated the Tatars of the Golden Horde in the spring of 1387 and Tokhtamysh, fearing encirclement, retreated on the same path north, suffering some casualties.<sup>7</sup>

The presence of Timurid troops in Azerbaijan had consequences on the Northern shore of the Black Sea. The decision of the Khan of the Golden Horde to escalate the conflict with Timur, whose claim for supremacy in the Tatar world he viewed as unacceptable, since he was only an affiliated member and not a direct descendant of Jochi, determined Tokhtamysh to relax the relations with his neighbours on the Dnieper and from the Crimea by making some territorial and financial concessions. In August 1387—several months after Timur’s

5 Lajos Fekete, *Einführung in die persische Paläographie. 101 persische Documente*, ed. G. Hazai, (Budapest, 1979), doc. 3, pp. 71–75 + photos no. 3–5. The beneficiary of this privilege of immunity (*Soyurgal*) was Sheik Dursun of Marakan. The sheik and his descendants from Culfa received several immunities in Azerbaijan between 1396–1434 (*Ibidem*, doc. 1, pp. 63–65; doc. 2, 67–69; doc. 5, 87–88).

6 The chronicler Seyfi reports that Timur installed Suyurkatmîş, an obscure descendant of Genghis, as sovereign, whose name was coined on money (*sikke*) and pronounced at prayer (*hutbe*). After he gained control over the finances and the army, Timur apparently had him poisoned in order to become sole ruler (*L’ouvrage de Seyfi Çelebi, historien ottoman de XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. J. Matuz, (Paris, 1968), pp. 124–125). In 1388, Sultan Mahmud, the son of the late khan, was installed as puppet ruler.

7 *Zafarnāma*, 102.

victory in the Southern Caucasus—, Tokhtamysh concluded a new agreement with Caffa, with favourable conditions for the Genoese merchants.<sup>8</sup>

After he was defeated again by the Timurids, on May the 20th 1393/*receb* 795, near Tana, Tokhtamysh issued a *yarlik* (privilege) for Władisław Jagiełło,<sup>9</sup> reconsidering the tribute of the Polish king, granting free passage to his “associated merchants” (*bazirgan ortaklar*) and formally accepting Polish rule of some territories on the Dnieper, such as the Kiev (*Mankerman*) region, which the khans of the Golden Horde had previously viewed as being part of Genghis Khan’s legacy. This concession, in fact an acknowledgement of the *de facto* situation, allowed the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom to gain direct access to the Black Sea, through the border region on the left shore of the Dniester.

From Karabakh, Timur descended into Eastern Anatolia and moved against the Kara Koyunlu clans, but was unable to obtain a decisive victory against them. In the following year, 1388, the Turkmen Kara Mehemed eliminated the Timurids from Tabriz.<sup>10</sup> The single noteworthy success of the first Timurid campaign in Anatolia was the vassalage of the Emir of Erzincan, Mutahharten, which the later respected until the disappearance of his sovereign.

The infightings between the Northern and Southern Tatars continued. To counter a Northern invasion, Timur attacked the Golden Horde in 1391, east of the Caspian Sea, and reached the mouth of the Volga.

The repeated failed attempts to capture Tokhtamysh with his own forces exclusively determined Timur to make two changes to his plan of subordinating the Golden Horde. The first was to support a valid and influential pretender from the ranks of the Northern clan and the second to gain the military assistance of a power capable of attacking the Western frontier of the Golden Horde. The dimension concerning the Black Sea of this scheme is revealed by an official document issued by the Timurid chancellery.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of 1395, from Shirvan, on the bank of the Samur River, Timur sent an ambassador

8 Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, trans. Samuel P. Willcocks (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2012), pp. 225–240.

9 Akedes Nimet Kurat, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivindeki Altın Ordu. Kırım ve Türkistan hanlarına ait yarlık ve bitikler*, (Istanbul: Dil ve Tarih-Companyğrafya Fakültesi, 1940), p. 147.

10 Faruk Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular (Başlangıçtan Cihan-Şah'a kadar)*, vol. 1, 3rd edition, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), pp. 49–52.

11 The crucial document for deciphering Timur Lenk’s policy, preserved as a copy (*suret*) in the Sarı Abdullah Efendi collection (Süleymaniye Library—Es’ad Efendi), formed in the first half of the 17th century, was discovered by Adnan Sadi Erzi, “Türkiye kütüphanelerinden notlar ve vesikalar II”, *Bellekten*, 14 (1950), p. 635 (with the proposal of dating the act in the spring of 1395). The full document was published by Zeki Velidi Togan, “Timur Osteuropapolitik”, in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländische Gessellschaft*, 108 (1958),

with a letter to Yıldırım Bāyezīd, proposing a joint military operation against Tokhtamysh, in the Northern Black Sea. The sender anticipated a pincer movement against his adversary, through a double attack: one from the Western Black Sea, carried out by the Ottomans, and the other through the corridor between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, carried out by the Timurids.

A disciple and political descendant of Hulagu Khan—whose directions of expansion he loyally followed—, Timur presented Bāyezīd with a clear vision of the bipolar division of the Eurasian world between the Timurids and the Ottomans, defining the influence areas and their distinct missions as warriors of Islam in the East and the West. Timur's offer was an invitation to expand the Ottoman sphere of authority in the Western Black Sea, limiting the area under direct Timurid administration to: Iran with “the countries of Mazenderan, Gilan, Kurdistan, Luristan, Şulistan, Huzistan, Fars, Iraq, Hormuz, Kerman, Gince, Mukran, Diyarbakır, Azerbaijan” (*memalik Mazenderanat ve Gilanat ve Kurdistan ve Luristan ve Şulistan ve Huzistan ve Fars ve Irakın ve Hormuz ve Kirman ve Gince ve Mukran ve Diyarbakir ve Azerbaycan*) and the recent acquisitions: Georgia, Abkhazia and Elbrus (*Alburz*).

In order to form a partnership with Bāyezīd, who was caught—as the Timurids knew—in “the holy war against the infidels from the Western parts of the world” (*der canib şark alem begazi küffar ve cihad*), Timur provided him information about Tokhtamysh's weak position in the Northern Black Sea. The supporters of the Khan of the Golden Horde were demoralised and “very confused” due to Timur's successes. Some of them—those deployed on the left flank of the Horde, where Timur had promoted Temür Qutluğ,<sup>12</sup> the cousin (*amzade*) of Tokhtamysh—had already joined the Timurid pretender and thus ruptured the unity of the Horde. Being under pressure from the East, the clans loyal to Tokhtamysh took refuge “on the coasts of the Kaffa Sea and in the Crimean cities” (*sevahil derya-i Kefe ve acam Kırım*), where they found themselves in a difficult situation.

Timur also announced that, although he had accepted peace negotiations—at the initiative of Tokhtamysh, who made the offer of a marriage between the two families—, he doubted their sincerity, since he had received news about Tokhtamysh's intention to cross Dnieper (*Özü*) River and to head towards the fortified places on “the shores of the Kaffa Sea” (*sevahil derya-i Kefe*). This

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no. 2, pp. 294–297 (Persian text); Yaşar Yücel, “XIV–XV. Yüzyıllar Türkiye tarihi hakkında araştırmalar”, *Bellekten*, 37 (1973) no. 146, pp. 182–190 (Persian text) + 9 p. photocopies.

12 According to the letter, Temür Qutluğ, a former chancellor (*bitikçian*) in the Timurid administration, was installed in the territory east of the Volga (*İtil*), in the provinces (*vilayet*) of Çağand, Siğnak, Nerkiş and Pular.

movement was perceived as Tokhtamysh's option in favour of a military confrontation. Timur, who referred to Bāyezīd as “warrior of Islam”,<sup>13</sup> alternated the threat of a direct attack against the Ottoman state, expressed openly at the beginning of the message, with the option justified by the description of the Golden Horde's situation: “since he <Tokhtamysh> entered in a relationship with the infidel Franks (*küffar-i firenk*) and maintains secret connections with them, we are bound to wage holy war (*gaza ve cihad*) against him. We <Timur> shall depart from this side, and you, my dear <Bāyezīd>, from the other side, and our joined forces shall destroy these stubborn infidels. The accomplishment of these plans is in His <Allah's> strength and the fate of the nations is in our strong hand”.

The Timurid offer of military collaboration also had an economic side, i.e. free passage for the Ottoman merchants (*tuccar*), with the remarkable advantage of the exemption from all customs and passage taxes. Timur's message ended with the presentation of two political goals subsequent to Tokhtamysh's obliteration: the elimination of Kadi Burhaneddin Ahmed, the Emir of Sivas-Kayseri, and of Barquq, the Egyptian Sultan.

The first stages of the Northern Black Sea project, i.e. avoiding an invasion of Egypt, the failed attempt to capture the fortress of Sivas (summer of 1394) and Tokhtamysh's attack in the Southern Caucasus, in the Shirvan area (late 1394), that had forced Timur to move his winter camp from Karabakh to Shirvan,<sup>14</sup> make us believe that Timur's strategy included the maximal goal of a military cooperation with the Ottomans and the minimum goal of neutralizing Bāyezīd.

This Timurid stratagem managed to isolate Tokhtamysh from his partners of the recently established anti-Timurid alliance: Mamluk Egypt, the Emirate of Sivas and the Ottoman state. By breaking the North-South (Cairo-Saray) Islamic axis, Timur Lenk was able to concentrate all his forces North of the Black Sea, knowing with certainty that his enemies will not be able to jointly attack his territories in the Southern Caucasus and he will not end up caught between two fronts in the corridor between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

13 In the prologue of the message, Bāyezīd was addressed as: “Khan, fighting hero <of Islam>, sword of Allah against the enemies, defender of the Muslims, protector of the world and the <Islamic> faith” (*ül-müsülmin celal ul-hakk ve ed-dunya ve eddin gazi Bayezid Bahadur Han*).

14 The news about the attack of “Sultan Tokhtamysh upon Timur Lenk, who was in Karabakh”, reached Cairo on *rebi ül-evvel* 797, i.e. between 25 December 1394 and 24 January, 1395, *Tārih ibn Qadi Şuhba par Abu Bakr b. Ahmad b. Qadi Şuhba al-asadi ad-Dimağqi* (779/1377–851/1448), vol. I, 781/1379–800/1397 (*Ms3*), ed. A. Darwich, (Damascus, 1977), p. 542; Makrizi, *Kitab us-suluk li-marifat duval al-muluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. 11/2, (Cairo, 1972), p. 838.



Between 1394 and 1396, there was no coordination among Timur's enemies. While Bāyezīd remained passive, Barquq supported Ahmed Celayir to regain his domain in the Arab Iraq; the Emir of Sivas, Kadi Burhaneddin, began the offensive against Alaaddin, the Emir of Karaman—who had invited Timur to attack Anatolia—and against Timur's ally, Mutahharten, the Emir of Erzincan. The only one who managed to strike an important point from the Timurid defensive system of the Western border was the leader of the Kara Koyunlu confederation, Kara Yusuf. The Turkmen defeated and captured the Timurid commander Atlamiş, who was entrusted with the defence of the Avnik region and fortress.<sup>15</sup>

Bāyezīd's passivity is understandable. On the one hand, the Ottoman Sultan had two main objectives in the Black Sea: the capture of Constantinople—in order to strengthen his bicontinental empire—and the securing of his Northern Danube frontier; the development of his Anatolian programme was encouraged by the proliferation of inter-Islamic regional conflicts, with the profitable consequence of a reduced power of resistance of his Anatolian neighbours. On the other hand, there were some latent tensions in Bāyezīd's relationships with the Egyptian Sultan and the Emir of Sivas, whose outbreak was only delayed by the apparition of a common enemy: Timur Lenk. The chronicler Ibn Hacer al-Askalani presents Barquq's statement: "I fear not Timur, since everybody shall help me against him, but I fear ibn Osman <Bāyezīd>"; to these can be added the repeated statements of one of Timur's admirers, the scholar Ibn Khaldun: "the Kingdom of Egypt can only fear ibn Osman".<sup>16</sup>

In the campaign against the Golden Horde, Timur engaged superior forces—whose numbers were metaphorically compared with the multitude of ants and locusts—and obtained victory in the battle on the Terek River (April 1395), but the loser couldn't be captured, and was therefore able to rally new forces and engage the dispersed Timurid units. According to the accounts of the Persian chroniclers Şerefeddin Ali Yezdi and Nizameddin Şami, some important groups from the Golden Horde retreated in opposed directions (East-West), while the main corps, under Tokhtamysh's rule, retreated under the Timurid pressure towards the Northern parts of the Deşt-ı Kıpçak, on the left bank of the Middle Volga (*Itil*). Khan Tokhtamysh tried to maintain his control over the *Uluğ-Yurt* or that *region*, an area considered as vital (the sacred imperial centre), where the founder of the Golden Horde, Batu Khan (1237–1256), had settled its capital of Saray. Şerefeddin Ali Yezdi, who compiled

15 Yaşar Yücel, *Timur'un Ortadoğu—Anadolu seferleri ve sonuçları (1393–1402)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), p. 88.

16 Ibn Hacer al-Askalani, *Inba al-cumr bi-anba al-umr*, ed. H. Habaşi, vol. 1, (Cairo, 1969), 492.

the works of Nizameddin Şami, includes in his chronicle some additional news concerning the operations from the North of the Black Sea. After reporting the pursuit of Tokhtamysh, in the chapter entitled “Relation about Timur’s raid on the right wing of the Ulus of Jochi and in the Rus territory” he describes the incursion of the Timurid Emir Osman towards the West: “after reaching the Özü (Dnieper) River and the place of Mankerman (Kiev), he robbed Beğ Yarık oğlan and several members of the Ulus of Öz Beg and most of them recognized his authority; only few of them, having a single horse, were able to save themselves. Baş Timur oğlan and Aktav fled, crossed the Özü River and entered the Ulus (territory) of Hurmaday”.<sup>17</sup>

Under the pressure of the Timurid blows, Emir Aktav, together with his numerous clan, took refuge from the Northern Black Sea, across the Danube and into the Ottoman state.<sup>18</sup> The movement of the Tatars was most likely made at Bāyezīd’s request, who colonized them on the Western shore of the Black Sea and used them to capture the local ports. In the “Minor Chronicle of Messembria”, under the date of 2 February 1399 (*indiction 7, 6907*), there’s mention about the following event: “the Tatars have conquered Varna”.<sup>19</sup> The Tatars mentioned by the Byzantine source are the members of the group recently and permanently separated from the Golden Horde.

In order to break the political unity of the Horde, Timur appointed Kuyurcak oğlan (the son of Urus Khan) as Khan and sacked the great Northern centres: Tana, Saray, Uvek, Karasu, Macar, Xacitarxan (Astrakhan). This systematic devastation of the cities had the purpose of destroying the main centres on the Crimea-Khwarazm route. The dimension of the Timurid intervention in the Crimean Peninsula and the clear designation of its targets are difficult tasks.<sup>20</sup> There are two groups of sources and they both state that the Genoese Kaffa was

17 *Histoire de Timur-Bec, connu sous le nom du Grand Tamerlan, Empereur des Mongol et Tartares, écrite en Persan par Cherefeddin Ali, natif d'Yezd*, ed. F.P. de la Croix, vol. II, (Paris, 1732), pp. 360–361; *Sbornik materialov otnosisičhsja k istorij Zolotoj Ordy*, II, eds. W.G. Tiesenhausen, A.A. Romaskevich, S.L. Volin (Moscow-Leningrad, 1941), p. 179.

18 Aurel Decei, “Établissement de Aktav de la Horde d’Or dans l’Empire Ottoman au temps de Yıldırım Bayezid”, in *60. Doğum yılı münasebetiyle Zeki Velidi Togan’a armağan. Symbolae in honorem Z.V. Togan*, (Istanbul: Maarif, 1955), pp. 77–92.

19 Peter Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I *Einleitung und Text*, (Vienna, 1975), p. 215.

20 Some historians believed that after the conquest of Tana (August 1395), Timur would have entered the Crimea, where he would have sacked Theodoro, Mangup, Solkhat/Solghat and Caffa, A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936) pp. 188–192; M.G. Safargaliev, *Raspad Zolotoj Ordy*, (Saransk: Mordovknigizdat, 1960), pp. 167–168. Berthold Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Russland 1223–1502*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), p. 134.

not attacked or sacked: firstly the Persian writings—under the common title of *Zafarnāma* (The Path of Victory)—of Şerefeddin Ali Yezdi and Nizameddin Şami, Timur’s court minstrels, who wrote down their master’s successes, and secondly the documents issued by the Venetian<sup>21</sup> and Genoese<sup>22</sup> authorities, after receiving several reports concerning the devastating losses caused by Timur to the merchants from the Black Sea centres.

Another Black Sea story is presented by the Arab chronicles that narrate the adventures of the Egyptian embassy sent by Barquq to the court of Khan Tokhtamysh, which was in Saray at the moment of Timur Lenk’s invasion. The head of the embassy, Tuluman Ali Shah, who came back to Cairo on 18 September, 1395/2 *zilhicce*, 797, presented the three-day confrontation between Timur and Tokhtamysh, the latter’s retreat into the Urus (Russian) territory and the fact that some of the Tatar chiefs from the Northern Black Sea changed their allegiance to the side of the victor.<sup>23</sup> The Mamluk diplomat also described his journey back that lasted almost five months. He first took the Saray-Kaffa land route, on which he was forced to pay 50,000 Dirhams in order to obtain free passage for the whole Mamluk embassy. He crossed the Black Sea following the Kaffa-Samsun route, and remained in the Anatolian port until the arrival of the news that: “Timur Lenk had conquered Kırım (the Crimea) and, after laying siege to Kaffa for 18 days, had conquered and ruined it”.<sup>24</sup> Most likely, the messengers had carried to Cairo only a rumour that had circulated in the Black Sea ports and was subsequently distorted by the Mamluk propaganda in order to create resentments along the local population against Timur Lenk. These were common practices in Oriental diplomacy,

21 Venetian documents from December 1395, date by which Tana was already sacked by the “treacherous and unjust Zamberlano” mention the Venetian merchants whom had fled “*ad marinam*” and those “*qui remanserunt in Caffa*”, an indication that the fortress of the Genoese port had not fallen to a possible Timurid attack, Nicolae Iorga, “Veneția în Marea Neagră. II. Legături cu turcii și cu creștinii din Balcani de la lupta de la Cosovo până la cea de la Nicopole (1389–1396)”, in *Academia Română. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, s. II, XXXV (1914), doc. XLIX, p. 115; Freddy Thiriet, *Délibérations des assemblées vénitiniennes concernant la Romanie*, II, (Paris-Hague: Mouton & co., 1971), doc. 933, p. 77.

22 A mandate issued in Caffa, on 4 June 1395, by Inofio Pozzo for Raffaele Testana, empowering the latter to recuperate a load of copper scales from “patron” Nichita Cochama of Sinope—clearly shows that the city was not sacked, Gian Giacomo Musso, *Navigazione e commercio genoveze con il Levante nei documenti dell’Archivio di stato di Genova (sec. XVI–XV)*, (Rome, 1975), doc. 10, 249–250.

23 Ibn al-Furat, *Tarih ad-duval va ul-muluk/The History by Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd al Rahim a-l Furat*, ed. C.K. Zurayk, vol. IX/1, (Beyrouth, 1938), p. 457.

24 *Sbornik materialov otnosisčihsjja k istorij Zolotoj Ordy*, vol. I, ed. W.G. Tiesenhausen (Sankt Petersburg, 1888), p. 322 (Arab text), p. 330 (translation from the chronicle of Ibn Dukmak); p. 357 (Arab text), pp. 363–364 (translation from the chronicle of Ibn Furat).

who laid a considerable emphasis on dissimulation. A false rumour born in Cairo concerned the relations between Tokhtamysh and Bāyezīd. The Arab annals recorded a military confrontation between Tokhtamysh and Bāyezīd on 11 April 1399, an imaginary collision placed by several renowned historians in the Western part of the Black Sea, North or South of the Danube.<sup>25</sup> In the spring of 1399, following his Anatolian programme, Bāyezīd had joined the enemies of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and therefore it was only normal for Cairo to harbour malicious rumours about the Ottoman leader, whom had forcefully and illegally acquired Islamic regions that were previously under Egyptian domination.

The great Timurid plunder, that lasted for a year, pulverized the cohesion of the khanate due to the political and territorial fragmentation of the Horde, that led to infightings for regional supremacy, with immediate consequences and deep influences on the Golden Horde's position and evolution as a decision-maker in the Northern Black Sea and South-Eastern Europe. The Timurid blow shattered the offensive potential of the Golden Horde and created opportunities for the rise of the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom on the Northern shores of the Black Sea. Timur also encouraged the separatist tendencies from the two edges of the Horde that tried to escape Saray's authority with the support of foreign forces. This process became irreversible after Timur's blow, but was kept in check by the rise to power in khanate from the Northern Black and Caspian Seas of the Edigu Mirza. A leader of the Nogai-Manghud tribe, he gained fame as a khan-maker and quickly became one of Timur's vassals,<sup>26</sup> in the summer of 1398, in order to win the fight with Tokhtamysh, who was an ally of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vitold.<sup>27</sup>

On his way back to Azerbaijan, after acquiring rich spoils and an impressive number of prisoners, among whom the most valuable were the Venetian and Genoese merchants, Timur organised new punitive expeditions against the Christian communities inhabiting the remote mountain areas from the Eastern Black Sea. Circassians, Georgians, Armenians and other nations were

25 Zeki Velidi Togan, *Umumi Türk tarihine giriş*, vol. 1, *En eski devirlerden 16. Asra kadar*, (Istanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1946), pp. 348–349. A. Decei, *Établissement*, p. 91.

26 The envoys of Edigu and Timur Kutluğ were well received by Timur during his Indian campaign. The commendation ceremony of the khan of the Golden Horde was described by the chronicler Giyaseddin Ali (*Dnevnik pohada Timuru v Indiji*, ed. A.A. Semenov, (Moscow, 1958), p. 69, under the date of 23 August 1398/9 *zilhicce*, p. 800).

27 In 1397, Tokhtamysh issued a *yarlık* by which he annulled the tribute owned for the former territories of the Horde that had entered under the rule of the Lithuanian Grand Duke, Antoni Prochaska, "Z Witoldowich dziejów. I. Układ Witolda z Tochtamyszem 1397g.," *Przegląd historyczny*, 15 (1912), pp. 259–264.

partly massacred and partly converted to Islam, while the Christian places of worship were turned into mosques. In the spring of 1396, the Tatar conqueror, who left a trail of fire and blood behind him, left the region close to the Black Sea and installed Miran Shah as governor of Azerbaijan and guardian of the Western borders.<sup>28</sup> Aiming to fulfil his mission, Miran Shah carried out several expeditions against the fortresses of Mardin and Mosul in 1397, in order to eliminate the clans of the Kara Koyunlu confederation from the region.<sup>29</sup>

The turn of the events from the Near East was such that it allowed Bāyezīd to expand his Eastern border until the vicinity of the Timurid and Mamluk frontier in record time. The Anatolian emirs overthrown by Bāyezīd found a valid protector in Timur, whom they provided with a *casus belli*—as the restorer of legality—to start the Timurid campaign in Ottoman Anatolia.

In 1397 the Ottomans occupied the Emirate of Karaman. Afterwards, in the summer of 1398, due to Timur's involvement in the Indian campaign (1398–1399) and the surprising disappearance of Burhaneddin—whom Timur could not defeat in 1394—Bāyezīd annexed the Emirate of Sivas. This principality had a coastline and controlled—according to the chronicler Abu Bakr-i Tihrani—the port of “Gohsek, on the shore of the Black Sea” (*Gohsek ke kenar derya-i Kara Deniz*).<sup>30</sup> Bāyezīd also attacked the Black Sea Emirate of Candaroğulları, from the territory of which he cut the port of Samsun. The Emir of Candaroğulları, Isfendiyar Beğ (1391–1439) kept the port of Sinope but remained isolated behind the Ottoman state. During their Black Sea campaign, the Ottomans also conquered the port of Giresun. Presenting this event, the contemporary Aziz b. Erdeşir Esterabadi placed it in the register of the conflicts between Moslems and Christians, because since the birth of Islam the Moslems didn't manage to enter and maintain under their dominance this Black Sea fortress, seen as impregnable, while its port was seen as “the well of the emperor (*tekfur*) whose capital is at Trebizond”.<sup>31</sup> The next step towards the East increased the tensions between Timur and Bāyezīd. The Ottoman Sultan attacked the territory of the Emirate of Erzincan, whose Emir, Mutahharten, had declared himself a vassal

28 According to the Arab sources, under the Timurid pressure organized by “ibn Timur Lenk” (= Miran Shah), Kara Yusuf took refuge into Syria (*Şam*), *Tarih İban Qadi Şuhba*, ed. A. Darwich, p. 617; Ibn Hacer, *Inba*, ed. H. Habaşi, vol. 1, p. 529; Makrizi, *Kitab us-suluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. 111/2, p. 880.

29 Nizameddin Şami, ed. F. Tauer, p. 136.

30 Abū Bakr-i Tihrani, *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyya. Ak-Koyunlular tarihi*, ed. N. Lugal, F. Sümer, vol. 1, (Ankara, 1962), p. 43.

31 Aziz b. Erdeşir Esterābādī, *Bezmu rezm (Eğlence ve savaş)*, ed. M. Öztürk, p. 485.

of Timur ever since 1394. Trying to force him to leave the alliance with Timur, Bāyezīd took the emir's children with him to Brusa, as hostages.<sup>32</sup>

Convinced that Timur will not return to the Near East after his Indian expedition, but will engage in a new campaign against China, Bāyezīd worsened his relations with Egypt by taking advantage of the unrest in Cairo, where the ascension of Faraj—son of Sultan Barquq, deceased in June 1399—was contested by the emir of Damascus and the wali of Aleppo. In August 1399/*zilhicce* 801, news reached the Mamluk capital about the capture of the Malatya and Elbistan fortresses by Bāyezīd and about the siege of Darende.<sup>33</sup>

The turmoil in Azerbaijan, the useless destruction of several structures in Tabriz in Sultanya, the administrative corruption, the illicit expenditures from the province's treasury, the incompetence shown in leading military campaigns, the cancellation of Timur's commands were the main accusations against Miran Shah. While the Persian chroniclers are either silent or they attribute these events to Miran Shah's mental crisis, due to a riding accident, Timurid historians consider this to be just an attempt to mask the prince's attempt to overthrow Timur Lenk.<sup>34</sup> On 10 September 1399/8 *muharrem* 801, Timur left Samarkand and went West, not before ordering his son Shah Rukh, the governor of Khorasan, to prepare for an expedition into Azerbaijan. Timur took the affairs of Azerbaijan into his own hands. He deposed Miran Shah, suppressed his incomes, placed him under house arrest and had his advisors investigated, trialled and executed.

In the winter of 1399/1400, Timur camped once again in Karabakh, a base from where he could have started a military campaign either against the Ottoman state or towards Egypt. Unlike the conjuncture of 1394–1396, Timur no longer faced a potent coalition. The most active members of the anti-Timurid coalition had disappeared: Tokhtamysh, Kadi Burhaneddin and Barquq, while the relations between Bāyezīd and Faraj had severely deteriorated. Not wanting to offer Timur any pretext for an invasion, the Sultan in Cairo—according to a note dated 1 April 1400/*şaban* 5, 802—ordered the emir of Malatya not to

32 The last part of the Erzincan campaign is described by the chronicler Oruç: “<Bāyezīd> left for Erzincan. In Erzincan he captured Tahirettin <Mutahharten> and they made peace (*sulh*); he gave Erzincan back but took his son and daughter <as hostages> and sent them to Brusa”, Franz Babinger, *Die frühosmanischen Jahrbücher des Urudsch. Nach den Handschriften zu Oxford und Cambridge*, (Hannover: Orient-Buchh. Lafaire, 1925), p. 32 (mss. Oxford); p. 101 (mss. Cambridge).

33 Şevkiye Inalcık, “İbn Hâcer” de osmanlı'lara dair haberler”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, t. VI (1948), no. 4, pp. 352, 375.

34 John E. Woods, “Turco-Iranica II: Notes on a Timurid Decree of 1396/798”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 43, (1984), no. 4, pp. 331–337.

allow the entrance into Egypt for Bāyezīd's envoy.<sup>35</sup> For the same reason, he forbade the crossing of Syria to the fugitives Kara Yusuf and Ahmed Celayir. These Timur's opponents, were defeated the Mamluk troops in June 1400, near Aleppo, but had to seek refuge to Bāyezīd, since the Timurid troops were after them.

Provoked by the Emir of Erzincan and by the chief of the Ak Koyunlu confederation, Kara Yülük Osman Beğ, a Timurid army corps advanced from Tabriz through Erzincan, towards Sivas. Another column headed South and—after a brief siege—captured the city of Kemah. This attack marked the beginning of the war between the Timurids and the Ottomans. According to the chronicler Ibn Hacer, at the beginning of August, Timur conquered the fortress of Sivas, sacked the city and slaughtered the local Muslim population.<sup>36</sup> Although the sources did not preserve any news about Bāyezīd's diplomatic and military measures in order to stop the Timurid offensive, it was very likely that the Ottoman Sultan tried to lure Timur into Central Anatolia, where he could catch him between two fronts with the help of the Emir of Dulkadir. Emir Nasreddin Mehmed, the Sultan's ally, made a surprising raid against the Timurid camps from Elbistan in August, while the Timurids laid siege to Sivas. The concentration of Ottoman troops at Tokat and the attempted pincer movement determined Timur to pause his attack, in order to avoid a fight with the Ottomans, and to head—on a sinuous route—towards Mamluk Syria. Detachments led by Shah Rukh, having Kara Yülük Osman Beğ in the vanguard, sacked and destroyed the settlements of the Dulkadir Turkmens.<sup>37</sup>

Shortly after the beginning of the Timurid operations in Syria, Bāyezīd moved towards the East and recuperated—with the help of the Kara Koyunlu confederation—the cities of Sivas and Erzincan. According to a "Historical calendar" (*Tarihi takvim*) the last of the two fortresses were reconquered between 22 August–20 September 1400/*muharrem 803*. The date—not mentioned by other sources—seems to be the correct one, since this source presents in the right order the places where Timur stopped on his route: Sivas-Elbistan-Malatya-Syria-Aleppo.<sup>38</sup> The Timurid march southwards was a series of successes. One after another, the regions of Darende and Elbistan

35 A. Abidin, "Aynî'nin hayatı ve İkdü'l—cümân'ında Osmanlılara ait verilen malûmatın tedkiki", *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Semineri Dergisi*, t. II, 1938, p. 132. The Ottoman ambassador was disgraced by the cutting of his beard.

36 Ş. Inalcık, *Ibn Hâcer'de*, p. 353.

37 Abū Bakr-i Tihrani, *Kitâb-i Dîyârbakrîyya*, ed. N. Lugal, F. Sümer, vol. I, (Ankara, 1962) p. 49 presents the coalition between Osman Beğ and "sahib kiran" (the sovereign of the serene astral constellation) Timur Lenk.

38 *Istanbul'un fethinden önce yazılmış Tarihi Takvimler*, ed. O. Turan, (Ankara, 1954), p. 83.

and the cities of Malatya and Behisni are captured and sacked. Aleppo fell at the end of October. At the end of the year, Damascus was under siege and his defences were shattered after the sudden flight of Sultan Faraj to the capital, under the pretext of a plot in Cairo. At the beginning of 1401, although the city had accepted a capitulation, Timur razed the settlement to the ground.<sup>39</sup> The following objective, Baghdad, the capital of the stubborn Ahmed Celayir, fell in the hands of the Timurids in June 1401.<sup>40</sup>

While the huge spoils, as preserved in the registers of the treasury, were sent to Samarkand, Timur went to Tabriz and encamped his troops in Karabakh. From here, he started an intense correspondence with the sultans in Brusa and Cairo, in order to prevent the forming of an alliance between the Ottomans and the Mamluks. In order to cripple the force of the Ottomans by blockading the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, Timur tried to obtain naval support from the maritime states threatened by Bāyezīd.<sup>41</sup>

The Black Sea became for Timur a communication route with the Christian powers that controlled the straits and dominated the Black Sea trade. From Trebizond, Timurid emissaries sailed to Kaffa, Sinope and Pera-Constantinople. On 19 August 1401, after sailing from Trebizond on a Genoese ship, two of Timur's envoys arrived to Pera: "frater Franciscus", from the Order of the Preachers (Dominicans) and "Saracenus". These Oriental envoys—one of them being John of Sultanieh—asked their Christian partners "to maintain the terms of the agreement" and not to conclude peace with the Sultan, since Timur intends to march "contra Basaithum Turchum" after harvest time (*post collectores bladorum*). The two emissaries, John of Sultanieh and a "Saracen", a Timurid diplomat whose identity remains unknown, returned to Timur's court following the same route on the Black Sea and disembarked in Trebizond, after sailing on the ship of merchant Bartolomeo Spinola.<sup>42</sup> In the spring of 1402, when he already had the collaboration of a squadron of 20 ships from Trebizond, Timur asked Byzantium and the Genoese, through the same John

39 Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun in Egypt. His publications and his historical research (1382–1406). A Study in Islamic historiography*, (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 96–98.

40 Jean Aubin, "Tamerlane à Baghdad", *Arabica*, 9 (1962) no. 2, pp. 303–309.

41 According to Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Merchants in crisis. Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth Century Depression*, (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1976), 126, the Byzantines and the Genoese of Pera had the initiative of an alliance against the Turks.

42 Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 1., (Paris, 1899), pp. 112–114; N. Iorga, "Documents concernant les Grec et les affaires d'Orient tires des registres de notaires de Crète", *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, 14 (1937), no. 4–6, pp. 89–90.



of Sultanieh, to equip a similar fleet and to send it to Trebizond.<sup>43</sup> However, Timur's plan of coordinating the Timurid land attack with assaults from the sea initiated by the Christians—as well as his maritime partners' mission of blockading the transfer of Ottoman units from the Balkans into Anatolia—failed.<sup>44</sup>

The Black Sea was also an escape route for the Anatolian emirs deposed by Bāyezīd. With the help of the fleet from Sinope, the emirs of Aydin, Mentеше and Germiyan reached Timur's camp.<sup>45</sup> The Black Sea breach in the Ottoman security system was spotted by the Tatar conqueror. In a missive addressed to Bāyezīd, Timur described his entire career as a glorious victor and member of the Ilkhanid family and noted the recipient's failure in occupying the port of Sinope.<sup>46</sup>

Although Timur's counsellors considered a war with the Ottomans to be futile, under the real reason that the conflict between the two Islamic states would create new opportunities for the “infidel Franks” to materialize their own aggressive intentions, the Timurid-Ottoman negotiations came to a stalemate. Timur, whose intervention into Asia Minor was legitimized by his status of protector of the Anatolian emirs, asked Bāyezīd to return to the subordinated status that existed between the Persian Ilkhanate and the Seljuk Turks. Bāyezīd, who was renowned in the Islamic world for defeating the crusaders, would have accepted the status of Timur's formal vassal, but he couldn't give up the territories of Eastern Anatolia, that he had conquered by force of arms.<sup>47</sup> The clash was unavoidable. The battle of Ankara (July 1402) ended with a decisive Timurid victory. The immediate effect of the Tatar success in the Straits was remarked by Laonikos Chalkokondyles: “Bāyezīd moved against Byzantion, but as his attempt to capture it by force was not making any progress, he tried

43 Marino Sanudo, *Vitae Ducum Venetorum*, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* XXII (Milan, 1733), col. 797C–798D.

44 Timur's minimal goal is shown by missive written by the Venetian Marco Grimani: “il Tamerlano ha mandato a Constantinopoli e Pera e Caffa certi suoi nunzi a notificare a'luoghi predetti, che tenessero modo d'avere tutte le galere, che si ponno avere, e che stieno in guardia, acciochè I Turchi non scappino”, *ibidem*, col. 799A.

45 The escape of the Anatolian emirs through Sinope is mentioned by the chronicler Aşıkpaşazade *Aşıkpaşaoğlu Tarihi*, ed. A.N. Atsız, (Ankara, 1975), pp. 75–76.

46 Feridun Beğ, *Munşeat es-Selatin*, vol. I, Konstantiniye, 1848/1264 H., pp. 127–128.

47 Through Emir Mutahharten, at the end of 1401 Bāyezīd sent an embassy to Timur, proclaiming himself as his vassal and requesting a peace treaty between the two Islamic states. Timur answered through an embassy that demanded as a condition for the peace the surrender of the fugitive Kara Yusuf. However, in March 1402, a new Timurid embassy demanded the cessation of the fortress of Kemah in order for Timur to cease his expedition into Ottoman Anatolia and to allow Bāyezīd to continue his war against the enemies of the Islamic faith, *Histoire de Timur-Bec connu sous le nom de Grand Tamerlan empereurs de Mongols et Tartares*, ed. F.P. de la Croix, vol. III, (Paris, 1722), p. 408.

to starve it into submission. And he would have taken the city had news not reached him that Timur was marching against him with a large army. Indeed, when he was captured by Timur he lost most of his dominion in Asia".<sup>48</sup>

Timur's crushing victory took by surprise his Christian allies, who now faced an unforeseen prospect: the Tatar invasion across the Straits and into Europe. The grim perspective of the new situation was perceived by the Venetian merchant Giovanni Cornaro, who resided in Constantinople, at the beginning of September 1402: "In fact we left a labyrinth to enter another" (*in effete noi siamo esciti da un labirinto e siamo in un'altro*).<sup>49</sup> The Timurid threat at the Straits was very real also at the beginning of the following year, after the Tatars captured the fortress of the port of Izmir. In February 1403, the Venetian Senate analyzed the possibility of sending the fleet into the Dardanelles, in order to prevent Timur Lenk from crossing the channel.<sup>50</sup> According to the treaty concluded by the new Sultan, Suleyman (1402–1411), with the Christian league, in the spring of 1403, the first took the obligation to support, on his own expenses, any maritime action against Timur ("sil sera alguna novitade de Tamberlom io ne daro le mie galie quante hauero, marini a vegnir in Constantinopoli ale mie spese").<sup>51</sup>

After pillaging Asia Minor up to the Straits, Timur retraced the political map of Anatolia by re-establishing the former emirates, ruled by their legitimate emirs as vassals of the Tatar conqueror. The Black Sea Emirate of Candaroğulları recuperated the regions and cities of Kastamonu, Kengri and Kalecik. The Ottoman state was fragmented: in Amasya, Çelebi Mehemed was recognized as vassal emir, while prince Suleyman enjoyed the same status in Rumelia. Karamania took back all its lost territories and enjoyed a strengthening of its frontier with the Ottomans by the acquisition of the fortresses of Kır Şehir, Sivri Hisar and Beğ Pazarı. Timur ensured Karamania's hegemony in Central Anatolia. In the East, around Diyarbakir, Timur imposed Kara Yülük Osman Beğ, the leader of the Ak Koyunlu confederation, who had already entered his service and had taken part in the Anatolian campaigns of 1401 and 1402.<sup>52</sup>

The collateral effects of the structure erected by Timur in Asia Minor had an impact both on the Straits and on the Western shore of the Black Sea. The division of the Ottoman state into rival parts stopped the Ottoman attempts to

48 *The Histories of Laonikos Chalkokondyles*, transl. by Anthony Kaldellis, 1, (Cambridge, Mass., 2014), 135.

49 Marino Sanuto, *Vitae Ducum*, col. 794D–795E.

50 N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, vol. 1, 132.

51 *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum sive acta et diplomata res venetas, grecas sive Levantis illustrantia*, ed. G.M. Thomas, (Venice, 1880), doc. 159, pp. 290–293.

52 Abū Bakr-i Tihriāni, *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyya*, ed. N. Lugal, F. Sümer, vol. 1, pp. 49–50.

capture Constantinople and reduced its offensive power at the Lower Danube, where Wallachia managed to keep Dobroudja under its dominion. Unlike the Golden Horde, which never recovered after the blow of 1395–1396, the Ottoman Empire surpassed the crisis following the decline of Timurid authority in Asia Minor, and was able to resume the offensive against the centres situated on the Western and Southern shore of the Black Sea during the reign of Mehmed I.

## 2 The Black Sea Trade—the Timurid Branch

Behind Timur's political targets, whose accomplishment turned him into the supreme ruler of the Islamic world, there was a vast economic program, forged in accordance with the vision of transforming his capital, Samarkand, in a global centre that will unite all commercial routes. By dominating Central Asia, Persia and Azerbaijan, seen as a land bridge towards the Black Sea, the Timurids controlled the middle route amongst those linking Europe with China and India. The Timurid route, that was famous especially for the silk trade, was placed symmetrically between the Southern road, under the dominion of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt, and the Northern one, ruled by the Golden Horde.

The largest silk producing centres from the Near East and Central Asia were within the Timurid Empire or in its proximity, and its territory included two great trade directions, between the South and the North and between the East and the West, on which goods from the Persian Gulf, India and China were transported. In order to capitalize this potential, Timur Lenk created the necessary infrastructure for the development of trade, by building caravanserais for the merchants. Tabriz was connected to Samarkand through a road with post stations that not only provided a fast network of communication, but also ensured the security of the merchants and their commodities. A set of measures was dedicated to the economic rebirth of Azerbaijan, an area where a new navigable channel was built, that ensured the irrigation for the new agricultural areas, whose owners were tax-exempt. Also, mulberry plantations and the growth of silkworms were encouraged. According to the chronicle of Nizameddin Şami, Timur had rebuilt Tabriz from scratch,<sup>53</sup> and it became the final customs centre, with a bureaucratic apparatus adapted to the regional, transit and international trade.

Since the silk industry brought great revenues to the state treasury, its whole activity, from production to sale, was regulated in accordance with the financial system of Ilkhanid Persia. This pattern stipulated in detail how commercial

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53 *Zafarnāma*, 117.

taxes (*tamga*) had to be collected, the attributions of the tax collector (*tamgaci*) and the conditions (*şart*) of practicing the profession of usurer (*sarrağ*, who partook in businesses with *kamha*—quality silk), silk producer (*dibaci*, producer and salesman); middleman (*dellal*) and textile producer (*bazzaz*) etc. It also regulated the manner of registering and drafting the necessary documents for selling, buying (*harid u furuş*) or lending (*icara-nama*) these goods.<sup>54</sup>

The Timurids encouraged indigenous trade through the institution of the “associated merchants”,<sup>55</sup> who received credits with interest from the public treasury and could benefit from certain immunities (*tarhan*), that exempted them from several taxes, granting of gifts and gratuities and ensured the free use of working animals.

How profitable the trade on the North-South axis of the Timurid Empire was is shown by the purchase’s ledger of the merchant Şemseddin Mehemmed. Credited with 30,000 Dinars by the Prince of Shiraz, Mirza Abdullah, the merchant bought from the local market: 2003 pearls of various sizes, white and red santal, cloves, amber, coconuts, ebony, indigo, pepper and perfumes, for which he paid a total of 21,857 Dinars. He loaded all these merchandises on 10 camels and departed in 1438 on the Herat-Merv route, through Khwarazm, towards Ürgenç and with the destination at Saray. On this route, he had to pay 2,395 Dinars—i.e. around 11% of the merchandises’ total value—as custom duties, turnpike tolls and the rent for these “dessert ships”. Şemseddin Mehemmed managed to sell all his goods in Saray and bought Chinese silk products: satin, kemha, thrown silk and thrown silk fabrics, as well as wool and Russian linens, for which he paid 45,900 Dinars. On his way back from the Golden Horde, he sold these goods in Herat, Yazd and Shiraz. After paying the expenses of his 725 days voyage, the merchant had 158,969 Dinars that he used to restore the initial credit of 30,000 Dinars. After sharing the required benefits with his creditors, including the Timurid prince, he was left with a profit of 38,969 Dinars.<sup>56</sup>

54 M. Minovi, V. Minorsky, “Nasir al-Din Tusi on finance”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 10 (1939–1942), pp. 755–789; W. Hinz, *Die Resāla-ye Falakyyā des Abdollah ibn Mohammad ibn Kiyā al-Māzandaram. Ein persischer Leitfaden des staatlichen Rechnungswesens (um 1363)*, (Wiesbaden, 1952); Nejat Göyünç, “Imad es-Seravi ve eseri” *Tarih Dergisi*, 20 (1965), pp. 73–86; P. Remler, “New Light on Economic History from Ilkhamid Accounting Manuals”, *Studia Iranica*, 14 (1985), pp. 157–177.

55 In the state form for a commercial association (*Şirket-nāma*) from Ilkhanid Persia, there were several articles that stipulated the division of the gain or the loss in accordance with the capital invested by each of the associated partners, Osman G. Özgüdenli, “Ilhanlı devrine ait anonim bir münşeat mecmû’asi: Risāla al-Sahibiyya”, *Bellelen*, 63 (1999), no. 238, p. 742.

56 Walther Hinz, “Ein Orientalisches Handelsunternehmen im 15. Jahrhundert”, *Die Welt des Orients*, 4 (1949), pp. 313–340.

Aware of his negative image in the West, due to the killing, capture or bankruptcy of numerous Western merchants during his expeditions in the Golden Horde, Asia Minor and Syria, Timur tried to lure the Venetian and Genoese businessmen—within the borders of his empire, by ensuring the safety of their goods and their personal security on the Timurid roads. In the summer of 1402, the Timurid propaganda tried to convince the Catholic world that Timur was in fact a protector of the Christian merchants, rather than one of their predators. Before the battle of Ankara, the merchant Solomon Salvazzo, who was held captive by Timur, advised his countrymen from Trebizond to regard Timur's promises with suspicion.<sup>57</sup> Immediately after his victory against the Ottomans, on 1 August / *muharrem* 1, 805, the chancellery of the Tatar conqueror drafted two missives in Persian. One was a "Review of victory" (*fetihname*)<sup>58</sup> and the other, carried by John of Sultanieh, was addressed to Charles VI, King of France and Lord of Genoa. Timur offered to initiate direct trade with his European partners, by offering protection to each one's traders (*bazirgan*) and introducing his idea that the wealth of the world was ensured by the activity of the merchants.<sup>59</sup> Due to John of Sultanieh's endeavours,<sup>60</sup> Timur's economic preoccupations were known also around the Baltic Sea. The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Konrad von Junginen, sent Timur a congratulatory letter for his victory against Bāyezīd, specifying that he found out that Christian merchants which passed through Timur's provinces enjoyed everywhere peace and safety.<sup>61</sup> A similar letter was addressed by the chief of the military order to Miran Shah, praising the protection offered to Christians within the Timurid Empire and their liberation from the Ottoman captivity, also mentioning that:

57 The passage containing this information, included in A Venetian chronicle attributed to Pietro Dolfín, was published by Ovidiu Cristea, in *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 19 (2001), p. 321.

58 The "Review of victory", written by Mevlana Şemseddin, describing the battle and Bāyezīd's capture, was addressed to Prince Mirza Ömer, son of Miran Shah, Ismail Aka, "Timur'un Ankara savaşı (1402) fetihnâmesi", *Belgeler. Türk Belgeleri Dergisi*, 11 (1981–1986), no. 15, pp. 1–22.

59 Silvestre de Sacy, "Mémoires sur une correspondance inédite de Tamerlan avec Charles VI", *Memoires de l'Institut Royale de France, Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, t. VI, 1842: p. 473 (the Persian text); p. 474 (the translation); E. Charrière, *Negociations*, vol. 1, (Paris, 1848), pp. CXVII–CXVIII.

60 For the political and literary activity of John of Sultanieh, whose European travels also included Transylvania (in 1409), see Şerban Papacostea, "Un călător în țările române la începutul veacului al XV-lea", *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, 18 (1965), no. 1, pp. 171–174.

61 Kurt Forstreuter, "Der Deutsche Orden und Südosteuropa", *Kyrios, Vierteljahresschrift für Kirchen- und Geistes-Geschichte Osteuropa*, 3 (1936), p. 271: "quod mercatores christiani, quocumque ad vestra dominia mercandi gracia transeunt, undique habent securitatem et pacem".

“de mercatoribus vero addicimus dignum esse quali libertate christiani in teris vestre dominacionis prerogati fuerint”.<sup>62</sup>

At the beginning of the 15th century, Azerbaijan became the centre for the silk, velvet and spice trade. The manufacturing and trade centres of Tabriz, Sultanya, Maraga or Qazvin supplied the ports of Trebizond, Samsun, Sinope and Kaffa with these goods. According to the account of the Spanish traveller Ruy González de Clavijo: “This Gilan silk is exported from Sultaniyah to Damascus and other parts of Syria, also to Turkey and to Caffa with the neighbouring lands. Further to Sultaniyah is brought all the silk made at Shamakhi <in Shirvan> which is a place where much of this article is woven and Persian merchants travel thither to buy it, also Genoese and Venetians”. The same observer noticed that the caravanserais of Sultaniyah were the meeting place for business between the Christian merchants, especially those from Caffa and Trebizond, and the Muslims from Turkey, Syria and Baghdad. Gemstones, pearls and mother of pearls from Hormuz were processed in Tabriz and Sultaniyah and sold to the traders from Caffa, Trebizond and the Islamic world.<sup>63</sup>

Although in theory both Timur Lenk and Shah Rukh manifested the intention of developing international trade by ensuring free passage for the merchants and the security of the transited goods—as the messages addressed to the leaders of the Christian and Islamic states explicitly show—however, in fact this opening for the Latin merchants, visible during the reign of Timur Lenk, was followed by a prohibitive restriction during the reign of his son, that affected the interests of the Genoese and Venetian merchants active the Black Sea. Expelled from Tabriz by Sultan Uwais (1356–1374) of the Djalairid dynasty, around 1370, the Genoese community and the institution of the consulate were not re-established in the first half of the 15th century. The Bavarian Hans Schiltberger, who was familiarized with the Timurid market mentioned that all Christian merchants were forbidden from entering the city of Shiraz with their goods.<sup>64</sup> This prohibition of an unknown magnitude was imposed, most likely, at the request of the local merchants, whose activities were hindered by the strong competition of the foreigners.

The image formed by the Genoese and Venetian documents mirrors the members of the Armenian merchants' community as the middlemen of the

62 Ibid. pp. 269–270.

63 Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406*, transl. by Guy Le Strange, (London, 1928), p. 159.

64 *Hans Schiltberger Reisebuch. Nach der Nürnberger Handschrift*, ed. V. Langmantel, (Tübingen, 1885), p. 59.

silk trade towards the Black Sea ports.<sup>65</sup> The documents of a lawsuit that took place in 1411, in Caffa, present an Armenian merchant as the organiser of a caravan transporting silk on the Gilan–La Vati route. The governor of the port, under the authority of the Emperor of Trebizond, apparently seized the goods, including a *fordello* of silk valued between 100–120 *sommi*.<sup>66</sup>

However, the period of peace and prosperity for the Armenians in Azerbaijan, who had the necessary capital and connection for the silk and spice trade between Persia and the Black Sea ports was short-lived. The outbreak of the war between the Timurids and the Kara Koyunlu confederation for domination over Azerbaijan, a conflict in which also other satellites were drawn, transformed the region in a theatre of semi-permanent military operations, followed by massacres, robberies and plagues.

The political and military instability of the main powers of the region and the chronical insecurity in the area<sup>67</sup> led to the disruption of caravan trade and to the dispersion of Armenian merchants towards safer areas, either Black Sea ports such as Trebizond, Caffa or Cetatea Albă, either the Mediterranean. In 1414, the Venetian Senate allowed the settlement of a group of Armenians from Trebizond, Sivas and other trade centres from Eastern Asia Minor, in Crete and Negroponte.<sup>68</sup> In 1427, at the request of the Consul of Caffa, the Ducal Governor Giacomo de Isolani granted Genoese citizenship to the Armenian merchant Haci Şemseddin of Erzincan, who lived in Trebizond (*habitatoris Trapezundis*).<sup>69</sup>

The weak presence on the part of the Genoese and Venetian Black Sea merchants in the Timurid centres was due mostly to the way the emperors of Trebizond managed their position as rulers of the ports whose geographical

65 The inquiry started in 1403 in Pera showed that during the previous year the Genoese emissaries sent to the emperor of Trabzon had received bales of silk from an Armenian “qui se tractabat pro Januense”, with the purpose of using these precious goods “in subsidium presentis necessitates guerre”, Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, vol. 1, 65–67.

66 Michel Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XII<sup>e</sup>–début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. II, (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1978), 733; Aldo Agosto, “Orientamento sulle fonti documentarie dell’Archivio di Stato di Genova per la storia dei Genovesi nella Russia meridionale”, *Cinquant’anni di storiografia medievista italiana e sovietica. Gli insediamenti genovesi nel Mar Nero. Atti del Convegno storico italo-sovietico e della tavola rotunda. Genova 11–13 novembre 1976*, (Genoa: Associazione Italia-URSS, 1982), p. 379.

67 The dramatical consequences of the clashes in Azerbaijan are presented by contemporary Armenian sources, Hrand D. Andreasyan, “XIV, ve XV. yüzyıl türk tarihine ait ufak kronolojiler ve kolofonlar”, *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3 (1972), pp. 85–122.

68 C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l’histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge*, vol. III, (Paris, 1881), p. 40.

69 Laura Balletto, *Liber Officii Provisionis Romanie: Genova, 1424–1428*, (Genoa, 2000), doc. 265, pp. 294–295.

position made them the most accessible for the silk and Indian spices trade. Fearing a decrease in their incomes from the customs of Oriental goods, the sovereigns of Trebizond repeatedly prevented the Genoese and the Venetians from obtaining financial and territorial facilities in these harbours.<sup>70</sup> Probably such financial reasons determined the businessmen of Tana to reactivate, after two decades, a bypass land route, following the subsequent road from the Western Black Sea: Tana–Xacitarxan–Derbent towards Shirvan. The will of the merchant Lorenzo Contarini, written in Tana in 1413, mentions the project of a business travel on the trans-Caucasian route or with the galley on the Caspian Sea, until the ports of the Emirate of Shirvan.<sup>71</sup>

Due to the scarcity of the sources, the volume and value of the goods coming from the Timurid empire to the Black Sea ports cannot be—even remotely—estimated. A useful clue for the size of the commercial traffic and the structure of the Oriental goods can be found in the Venetian imports of 1404. During this year, when the Tabriz–Trebizond route was open, Venice bought from this Black Sea commercial center the following commodities: silk, 31 tons; pepper, 20 tons; indigo, 20 tons; cinnamon, 7 tons; ginger, 4 tons; leather goods, 41 tons; pearls—an unspecified number.<sup>72</sup> These quantities of spices are inferior in volume and structure to the similar products taken by the Venetians, Genoese and Catalans from the Egyptian ports, such as Beyroth or Alexandria.<sup>73</sup> However, the Black Sea route was still attractive due to the silk that could be loaded in the ports of Samsun, Trebizond, Tana and Caffa.

Although Shah Rukh maintained his link with the Spice Islands through Hormuz, he lost the economic war with Egypt. The Mamluks took control of the trade with India through Jeddah, where they established a custom house that collected taxes for all products coming from India. Since 1422–1423, from the port of Jeddah, a direct route was established, through the Red Sea and

70 For the evolution of the military and commercial conflicts between the Empire of Trebizond, Genoa and Venice in the first half of the 15th century, see S.P. Karpov, *L'Impero di Trebisonda: Venezia, Genova e Roma, 1204–1461. Rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali*, (Rome: Il Velcro, 1986), pp. 106–109, 156–167.

71 Angeliki Tzavara, “Une campagne commerciale en ‘Perse’, 1390–1391”, *Turcica*, 36 (2004), pp. 28–29.

72 Robert-Henri Bautier, “Les relations économiques des Occidentaux avec les pays d’Orient, au Moyen Âge. Points de vue et documents,” in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l’Océan Indien. Actes du huitième Colloque International d’Histoire Maritime (Beyrouth, 5–10 septembre 1966)*, ed. Michel Mollat, (Paris: SEVPEN, 1970), p. 295.

73 Christopher H.H. Wake, “The Changing Pattern of Europe’s Pepper and Spice Imports, ca. 1400–1700.” *Journal of European Economic History*, 8 (1979), no. 2, pp. 361–403 and the amending work of Eliyahu Ashtor, “The Volume of Medieval Spice Trade.” *Journal of European Economic History*, 9 (1980), no. 3, pp. 753–763.



the Indian Ocean, with the Indian port of Calicut, thus bypassing the crossing through the port of Aden, under the control of the Resuli Sultanate.<sup>74</sup> Through this move, Egypt preserved its position as Europe's main provider of spices. By developing the roads to China, Shah Rukh tried to transfer by land the merchandises that were transported on the maritime routes connecting China with Egypt, that were particularly active between 1405–1433.<sup>75</sup> The economical conflict with Egypt, that also had a political background, had consequences on the Black Sea trade, by increasing the volume of spices and silk that came on the Timurid route towards its ports.

Since the policy of the sultans in Cairo was to impose a monopoly on the spice trade, by expelling all foreigners through edicts and developing an offensive military programme in the Eastern Mediterranean, towards Cyprus and Rhodes, the Genoese and Venetian merchants had all the reasons to retreat towards more liberal and stable areas. Given this situation, the plan of bringing goods from the Levant in Europe by bypassing Egypt through a longer but safer route was once more an actuality. Beltramo di Leonardo di Mignanelli, a former spice merchant from the East and author of two monographs, entitled *De Barchocho*<sup>76</sup> and *Gesta Impiüssimi Viri nomine Thomorleng in partibus Siria et Turchie*<sup>77</sup> (written in 1416), presented in 1443 such a commercial project to Pope Eugene IV. This expert in Oriental problems recommended a Papal interdiction on the commerce with the Mamluk Sultanate and a compensation for the losses by organising a new route for the spice trade, through Trebizond. The Black Sea route had a minimal risk and the land route Trebizond–Tabriz–Hormuz was safe and had lower costs.<sup>78</sup> However, this project never materialized, since

74 For the taking over by the Mamluks of the Emirate of Mecca and the port of Jeddah in 1423, see Richard T. Mortel, "Prices in Mecca during the Mamluk Period." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 32 (1989), pp. 286–287.

75 Archibald Lewis, "Maritime Skills in the Indian Ocean. 1368–1500." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 16 (1973), p. 238.

76 *De Barchocho* was published by Nicolae Iorga (*Notes et extraits*, vol. II, 529–542—with the title *Ascensus Barcoch*, after the manuscript reviewed by the author in 1447, in Siena) and by W.J. Fischel, "Ascensus Barcoch. A Latin Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Barquq of Egypt (D. 1399). Written by De Mignanelli in 1416", *Arabica*, 6 (1959), pp. 57–74 and 152–172.

77 The Sienese manuscript was printed under the title *Vita Tamerlani*, in Stephani Baluzii Tutelensis, *Miscellanea novo ordine digesta*, ed. J.D. Mansi, vol. IV, (Luccae, 1764), pp. 134–141. The version from a Viennese corpus was edited by Walter J. Fischel, "A New Latin Source on Tamerlan's Conquest of Damascus (1400–1401) (B. de Mignanelli's 'Vita Tamerlani' 1416). Translated into English with an Introduction and a Commentary", *Oriens*, 9 (1956), pp. 201–232.

78 *Informatio Beltrami de Mignanellis contra infidelis. Eugenio IV papae dedicata 1442–1443, in Consilium Florentinum. Documenta et scriptores* (series A *Fragmenta protocolli diaria privata sermones*, vol. III, fasc. 2), ed. G. Hofmann, (Romae, 1951), pp. 83–86.

the Venetians maintained their positions as the main middlemen of the trade between the East and the West and the privileged partners of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt.

### 3 The Dispute for Azerbaijan and the Decline of the Timurids

Shah Rukh (1409–1447) organised three major military campaigns in the South-Eastern corner of the Black Sea, around Azerbaijan, that took place between 1420/1421, 1429/1430 and 1435/1436. These expeditions, to whom the contemporaries attributed Pontic objectives, were intended to recover the rich province of Azerbaijan and to bring some Black Sea realms back on the Timurid orbit. Unlike his father, who decisively defeated the Golden Horde in the competition for the domination over Azerbaijan, Shah Rukh had to face a far more formidable adversary, the Kara Koyunlu confederation.

The cause of the Timurid decline in the Black Sea resides in the state pattern founded by Timur, an empire with a weak foundation, that did not survive its founder. Following Timur's death, in February 1405, during his campaign against China, his numerous descendants engaged in a series of fierce battles for the throne in Samarkand, although the Timurid sovereign had appointed his nephew, Pir Muhammad (son of Ömer Sheikh), the governor of a province based in Kabul, as his successor.<sup>79</sup> The prolongation of these intestine confrontations created the favourable frame for the ascension of the Kara Koyunlu confederation and for the gradual exit of Persian Iraq and Azerbaijan from the Timurid domination.

In the Western part of the Timurid Empire, the Turkmen confederations of the Kara Koyunlu and Ak Koyunlu gradually regained their strength. Timur's former enemies, Kara Yusuf and Ahmed Celayir, freed from the citadel of Damascus, re-entered the political stage of Iraq and Azerbaijan in 1405. In the summer of the same year, Ahmed Celayir, taking advantage of a local insurrection, took back Baghdad, eliminating from the area the administration of the Timurid Mirza Ömer, son of Miran Shah.<sup>80</sup> The ruler of the Kara Koyunlu managed, in the short term, between 1405 and 1408, to remove the Timurids from the Persian Iraq, Eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan, taking hold, during the

79 Among the Timurid pretenders, Khalil (son of Miran Shah) took power in Transoxiana and entered Samarkand in March 1405, and placed his nephew, the minor Muhammad Cihangir, on the throne. Khalil maintained control over the capital for four years. Shah Rukh proclaimed himself as successor in Herat, while Miran Shah and the other two sons, Ebu Bekir and Ömer, in alliance or against each other, disputed the rule of Azerbaijan.

80 F. Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, p. 71.

first stage, of their last Anatolian bases, the fortresses of Bitlis, Van and Avnik (Köprüköy).<sup>81</sup>

The Timurids lost the alliance founded by Timur Lenk with the Ak Koyunlu confederation, whose ruler had founded, in 1403, under Timurid protection, a centralised state around the province of Diyarbekir. According to the account of the Persian chronicler Tihrani, in the spring of 1406, following several small-scale confrontations between the Ak Koyunlu and the Kara Koyunlu tribes, there was an agreement. Kara Yusuf proposed to Kara Yülük Osman a mutual separation of the influence areas: “the best policy for you <Kara Yülük>, as you know, is to fight in Anatolia and Syria, and for me to fight the Chagatay <the Timurids>”.<sup>82</sup> Ahmed Celayir took advantage of the retreat of the Timurid Ebu Bekir, in the summer of 1406, and temporarily restored the Celayirid domination over Tabriz.<sup>83</sup> Ebu Bekir’s attempt to retake the city failed, as he was defeated in the autumn of the same year by the troops of Kara Yusuf, which was the first great defeat of the Timurids by the Turkomans.<sup>84</sup>

During the time when Prince Shah Rukh tried to occupy Samarkand, with the support of the superior bureaucratic apparatus of Khorasan, the Western frontier of the Timurid Empire disintegrated. Miran Shah, the first son of Timur Lenk, lost the confrontation with Kara Yusuf, being killed in April 1408, near Tabriz. In 1409, Shah Rukh eliminated his grandson, Khalil Sultan, from Samarkand, and became the absolute ruler of the Timurids, governing from Herat.<sup>85</sup>

Challenged from within, Shah Rukh could not extend his authority over Azerbaijan and Mesopotamia. The larger part of these areas was under the authority of Kara Yusuf, who made a new breach in the Timurid connection with the Black Sea. In 1410, the Turkmen leader, allied with the Döger clans, defeated and executed (through strangulation) his former sovereign and exiled fellow, Ahmed Celayir, taking hold of his capital, Tabriz. The Timurid influence area in the Eastern Black Sea diminished to the advantage of the Kara Koyunlu confederation, whose authority extended also over the Emirate of Shirvan. The emir of this silk-producing region, Sheikh Ibrahim, was defeated during the Turkmen invasion and taken prisoner. The Persian sources reveal that the emir

81 Ismail Aka, “Şahruh’un Kara-Kayunlular üzerine seferleri”, *Tarih İncemeleri Dergisi*, 4 (1989), p. 4; I. Aka, “Timur’un ölümünden sonra doğu Anadolu, Azerbaycan ve Irak-i Acem’de hâkimiyet mücadeleleri”, *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları*, 22 (1989), no. 1–2, p. 61.

82 Abū Bakr-İ Tihrani, *Kitâb-i Diyârbakrîyya*, ed. F. Sümer and N. Lugal, vol. 1, pp. 58–59.

83 Ismail Aka, *Mirza Şahrhruh ve zamani (1405–1447)*, (Ankara: TTK, 1994), p. 50.

84 F. Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, p. 72.

85 I. Aka, *Mirza Şahrhruh*, p. 89.

was reinstalled as a vassal only after paying a ransom of 12,000 Iraqi Tomans, payed in silk.<sup>86</sup>

After recuperating, in 1413, the region of Khwarazm from the Golden Horde,<sup>87</sup> Shah Rukh began to take the first measures for the restoration of Timurid domination over Azerbaijan. In the autumn of 1413, the Timurid leader ordered the preparation of an offensive campaign against Kara Yusuf, in the spring of the following year. However, this expedition did not arrive in Azerbaijan, but was conducted against the province of Fars, following the insurrection of Iskender, Shah Rukh's nephew.<sup>88</sup>

The rise of the Kara Koyunlu and the decline of the Timurids were felt in the political centres of Anatolia. An illustrative clue of the decline of the Timurid influence in Asia Minor is provided by the pretenders to the Ottoman throne, who did not call upon Shah Rukh's military and political support, but rather that of the Christian world in the Western Black Sea. Prince Mustapha left the Timurid area and reappeared in Eastern Anatolia in 1414. The pretender travelled by sea from Trebizond through Sinope towards Wallachia's coastline, finding shelter at the court of Mircea the Elder, in 1415. The same route (Sinope—the coast of Dobruja) was taken by the pretender Sheikh Bedreddin during the following year. Sultan Mehemmed I (1413–1421) had broken the political and territorial *status quo* imposed by Timur and had reunified the Asian and European halves of the Ottoman state, a process consolidated by the killing of his brothers. Shah Rukh admonished the sultan and accused him of disrespecting the Turk-Mongol custom according to which the state belongs to all the members of the dynasty. Mehemmed delivered a protocolary answer and paraphrased the Persian poet Sa'adi regarding the impossibility for two kings to co-exist in a single realm (*iklim*) and pointed out the difficulties created by the Anatolian emirs for the waging of the holy war (*cihad*) by the house of Osman, naming himself as vassal of Shah Rukh. Affected by the Timurid decline, Kara Yülük Osman Beğ was unable to resist Kara Yusuf's onslaught and therefore left his Timurid lord for the protection of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt.

86 Charles François Defremery, "Fragments de géographes et d'historiens arabes et persans inédits relatifs aux anciens peuples du Caucase et de la Russie Méridionale", *Journal Asiatique*, 1849, no. 10, pp. 242–250 (the chronicle of Mirkhond); Boris A. Dorn, *Das Asiatische Museum des kaiserlichen Akademie des Wissenschaften zu St Petersburg*, (St Petersburg, 1846), pp. 671, 673 (from the chronicle *Lübb üt-Teyarih* by Huseyni Seyfi Kazvini).

87 S. Andō, "Das Corps der timuridischen Emire under Šahruh", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländische Gessellschaft*, 139 (1989), no. 2, p. 379.

88 Priscilla P. Soucek, "Easkandar B. Omar Šayx b. Timur: a Biography." *Oriente Moderno*, 15 (1996), no. 1, pp. 81–82.

In order to enhance the implementation of the Kara Koyunlu administration in Eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan, Kara Yusuf adopted a policy of religious tolerance, gaining the support of the Christians. A stage of these measures was noticed by the Armenian chronicler Thomas of Metsoph, who noted that Kara Yusuf had reintroduced order and security in Armenia and allowed the Islamised Armenians to convert back to Christianity, while their Church was able to recuperate the monasteries transformed into mosques by Timur Lenk.<sup>89</sup> The religious tolerance that characterized the Kara Koyunlu Turkmens—whose leader was the subject of a condemnation sentence (*fetva*) issued by the supreme authority of Islam—was one of the main reasons why Shah Rukh—an intolerant Muslim sovereign—was unable to introduce his own administration in Azerbaijan, an area with a numerous Christian population, even after several military victories.

During the time when Shah Rukh had intensified his links with China, in order to draw the great silk caravans towards his state, the fame of Kara Yusuf spread around the Far East. After receiving Shah Rukh's embassy, in 1419, Emperor Cheng-tzu (1403–1425) confessed to the Timurid envoys his intention of sending emissaries to Kara Yusuf in order to purchase horses, given their fame. The Timurids offered an affirmative answer to the imperial question regarding the good state of the roads, but they conditioned the fulfilment of this operation on Shah Rukh's agreement and command.<sup>90</sup>

In the summer of 1420, when the Ottomans were engaged in a vast offensive campaign north of the Danube, against Wallachia and Moldavia, while their fleet attacked the ports of Kilia and Moncastro, Sultan Mehmed Çelebi received a message with a dangerous content from Kara Yusuf. The sender warned his partner regarding Shah Rukh's project of organising a military expedition on the following course: the invasion of Anatolia; the crossing of the Straits through Constantinople; passing through Moldavia (*Kara Boğdan*) and "Urus"; returning to Azerbaijan (*Azerbaycan*) through Caffa (*Kefe*), Deşt-i Kîpçak, Derbent (Bab ül-Ebvab) and Shirvan.<sup>91</sup>

Yet, the Timurid leader had not planned an expedition around the Black Sea on the course suggested by Kara Yusuf. By overestimating the offensive

89 Vl. Minorsky, *Thomas of Metsop'on Timurid-Turkman Wars*, 7–9, in Idem, *The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages*, ed. J.A. Boyle, (London, V.R., 1978), art. XI.

90 *A Persian Embassy to China. Being an Extract from Zubdatu't Tawarikh of Hafiz Abru*, ed. K.M. Maitra, L.C. Goodrich, (New York, 1970), 62–63; M.N. Özerdim, "Çin kaynakları ile Hitay Sefaretnamesi 'Acaib-ül-letaiif' arasındaki ilgi", *Dil, Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4 (1946), no. 2, p. 176.

91 Feridun Beğ, *Munseat es-Selatin*, vol. I, first edition (1848/1264), pp. 144–145; second edition (1858/1264), p. 152.

capacity of Shah Rukh's troops, the ruler of the Kara Koyunlu wanted to obtain Mehmed Çelebi's support, in order to break the encirclement created by the sovereign from Herat around his state. In order to gain the Ottoman Sultan, Kara Yusuf also forged a letter—a missive addressed to Shah Rukh by Kara Yülük Osman Beğ and supposedly captured by his agents. In this forged letter, Kara Yülük called upon Shah Rukh to invade Ottoman Anatolia, mentioning that all his allies are ready to support him. The supporters of the Timurids were presented as being the following: Emir Mehmed of Karamania; Isfendiyar of Kastamonu; Huseyn of Hamid; Hamza Beğ, son of Cuneyid of Izmir; Süleyman, lord of Dulkadir; the emperor (*tekfür*) of Constantinople; the emperor of Trebizond; the kings of Georgia (*melikan Gürcistan*) and the lords of Shirvan, Gilan, Kurdistan, Laristan, all Shah Rukh's "vassals" (*fermandar*).<sup>92</sup> Although a forgery, the document clearly shows Shah Rukh's influence area in the Southern Black Sea, around the areas ruled by Byzantium, the Emirate of Candar, the Empire of Trebizond and Georgia.

Shah Rukh declined Kara Yusuf's request to legitimize him as ruler of Azerbaijan, but, fearing a one on one confrontation with the Kara Koyunlu confederation, he prepared the ground for his first offensive campaign to the West by vast diplomatic endeavours, in order to isolate his adversary. These initiatives and their targets are not mentioned by the Persian documents; however, they are revealed by the Arab narrative sources. The Arab chroniclers noticed that, for the first time since Timur's demise, Shah Rukh's envoys arrived in Cairo—in the spring of 1420/*rebiul-evvel* 823, shortly after an Ottoman emissary. The aim of the secret mission of the Timurid delegation is not mentioned. Nonetheless it may be inferred using a second letter of the Timurid ruler which arrived in Cairo at the beginning of 1421/*muharrem* 824. This latter document announced his victory over Kara Yusuf and the death of the Turkmen. The epistle shows that Shah Rukh had planned a joined intervention against Kara Yusuf.<sup>93</sup> Despite being ill, the Egyptian Sultan started the expedition. In July 1420, Mamluk troops, joined by the forces of Kara Yülük, recaptured the fortress of Erzincan, and in the middle of August/*4th of şaban* 823, the qadi of the four official rites signed the sentence by which a jihad was proclaimed

92 Feridun Beğ, *Munşeât*, vol. 1, second edition, 153. Kara Yülük denied that he had written this letter and accused Cihan Shah, son of Kara Yusuf, that he had forged the letter in Tabriz and sealed it with a fake seal (Ibid. 154).

93 The content of this unpublished letter is presented by A. Darrag, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay 825–841 (1422–1438)*, (Damascus, 1961), p. 370.

against Kara Yusuf, who was charged with apostasy and severe prejudices brought to the Muslims.<sup>94</sup>

On 25 August Shah Rukh left Herat and headed for Azerbaijan. In October, the Timurid occupied Kazvin without a fight and headed for Sultaniyah, the last capital of the Persian Ilkhanate. On 13 November Kara Yusuf suddenly died, in Sistan.<sup>95</sup> Since none of his sons were present in the Kara Koyunlu encampment, the Turkmen army disintegrated.<sup>96</sup> Shah Rukh entered triumphant, without a fight, in Tabriz, thus restoring the Timurid domination in the region after 15 years. Resuming the tradition inaugurated by Timur, he camped for the winter in Karabakh. From here, he requested the cooperation of the Ottoman Sultan, in order to capture Iskender and prevent the Kara Koyunlu Turkmens from retreating to Anatolia.<sup>97</sup> From the Southern Caucasus, Shah Rukh restored the links with the Golden Horde, in order to rebuild the Timurid influence in the Northern Black Sea. Khan Ulugh Mehemmed received from Shah Rukh the Turk-Mongol symbols that made him a vassal of the sovereign from Herat.<sup>98</sup>

Lacking the required administrative and military tools in order to restore his direct domination and being unable to eliminate the Turkmen threat, he did not annex Azerbaijan. He chose what seemed as a more effective solution, to install a loyal follower, through whom he hoped he could completely defeat the Kara Koyunlu confederation. The chronicler and apologist for the Ak Koyunlu dynasty, Abu Bekr Tihrani, states that "sahib kiran" Shah Rukh entrusted Kara Yülük Osman Beğ with the government of Azerbaijan and installed his son, Ali Beğ, in Tabriz. However, the Persian source mentions that Ali Beğ was forced to leave Tabriz, since the local population was favourable to the Kara Koyunlu, and headed towards Diyarbakir while his adversary, Isfend, entered Tabriz.

94 *History of Egypt, 1362–1469 A.D.*, Part III 1412–1422 A.D., Translated from the Arabic Annals of Abu'l-Mahasin ibn Taghri Birdi, ed. W. Popper, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1957), p. 79.

95 Shah Rukh learned on 17 November of his adversary's demise, from a scout sent to Kazvin, A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i sadeyin ve mecmua-i bahreyin*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, (Lahore, 1949), p. 406. The chronicler Maqrizi (*Kitab us-suluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. IV, p. 542) reveals poisoning as the reason for Kara Yusuf's death.

96 The distribution of Kara Yusuf's sons, according to the Arab sources, was the following: Shah Mehemmed in Baghdad; Iskender in Kerkur; Isfend (Aspend/Ispend) in Adilcevaz; Cihan Shah in Sultaniyah and Abu Said in Erzincan. However, the letter sent by Iskender to Mehemmed Çelebi (Feridun Beğ, *Munşeat*, vol. I, second edition, 162) indicate another order: Shah Mehemmed and Isfend led the vanguard and Iskender the rearguard. Following Kara Yusuf's death, Shah Mehemmed and Iskender retreated to the mountainous area of Nakhchivan.

97 Feridun Beğ, *Munşeat*, vol. I, second edition, p. 159.

98 A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, p. 530.

With the support of the “Sultan of Trebizond” (*sultan-i Trabzon*), consisting of troops and siege ballistae (*fethi kale mençinik*), and after joining the troops from Trebizond and those of his son, Yakub Beğ of Kemah, near Erzincan, Kara Yülük Osman Beğ took hold of the area dominated by the fortresses of Kara Hisar and Ak Şehir.<sup>99</sup>

The fears of the Timurid sovereign concerning the swift comeback of the Turkmen forces came true. Iskender returned to Azerbaijan and eliminated the rulers installed by Shah Rukh. The Kara Koyunlu confederation was back on the offensive: in 1427, it had invaded Shirvan and in the following year had recaptured Sultaniyah, ruled Timurid by dignitaries.<sup>100</sup> This loss was the reason for the second expedition Shah Rukh into Azerbaijan. Unlike the first campaign, the Timurids no longer had the support of the Sultan of Cairo, since the relations between the two states had worsened after their ally, Kara Yülük Osman Beğ, led several raids on Egypt’s borders, probably at the suggestion of the sovereign in Herat.

The second campaign in Azerbaijan was, like the first one, wrongly perceived in several political environments. The Venetian chronicle of Antonio Morosini mentions a project of the “Tatar lord” to invade from Russia with 50,000 Tatars and to cross the Danube against “Turkey”. Threatened, Sultan Murād II (1421–1451) wanted to make peace with Venice.<sup>101</sup> However, Shah Rukh’s objectives during the expedition of 1429–1430 were far more limited and did not include the invasion of the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, Shah Rukh wanted the Ottomans’ support in his commercial and ideological conflict with the Mamluk Sultan Barsbay (1422–1438). In the spring of 1429, the sovereign of Cairo was preparing an expedition—delayed due to financial reasons—and concentrated his troops in Damascus for a campaign whose objective was to relieve the fortress of Erzincan, besieged by the Turkmen Kara Yülük Osman Beğ. The leader of the Ak Koyunlu captured Erzincan, while his son, Ali, captured, in 1429, the fortress of Harput,<sup>102</sup> threatening the security of the commercial centre of Aleppo.

99 Abū Bakr-i Tihriani, *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyya*, ed. N. Lugal, F. Sümer, vol. 1, pp. 89–90.

100 Iskender captured Emir Hoca Yusuf, the governor of Sultanya, Kazvin, Ahbar and Zincan, A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, p. 601.

101 Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, vol. VI II 1376–1650, (Bucharest, 1894), doc. XI, pp. 4–5: “Signor di tartari dito per nome ... sio de Tanberlan vegnudo dele parte de Rosia preso con L.M. tartary per pasar el Danubio su la Turchia, e lu per dubio de tanta molestia de brasi cercheria de aver volentiera de far paze con la dogal Signoria”.

102 Makrizi, *Kitab us-suluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. IV, pp. 802–803. *History of Egypt. 1382–1469 A.D. Translated from Arabic Annals of Abu'l-Mahâsin ibn Taghrî Birdî*, ed. W. Popper, pp. 64–65.



At the end of June 1429, Shah Rukh entered Tabriz and engaged Iskender in the battle of Selmas in September. Defeated, the leader of the Kara Koyunlu took refuge in Central Anatolia, being pursued until Erzurum by Prince Mirza Cüki. In the letter sent to Murād II by Kara Yülük Osman Beğ, there is a description of the manner in which “His Khaganal Excellence, the Grand Padishah of the East and the West, Emir Shah Rukh” (*der hazret hakani azami padişahi şark ve ğarb emirze Şahruh*), by his Imperial attack, had broken and scattered the sons of Kara Yusuf, robbed all their properties and those of their relatives, took vengeance and annexed all their territories, fortresses and cities until the borders of Azerbaijan. The sender also warned Murād that Shah Rukh had entrusted him the rule of Tabriz, Baghdad and Erzincan, until Sivas.<sup>103</sup>

In his winter camp in Karabakh (1429/1430), Shah Rukh received as a vassal the deserter Abu Said, Iskender’s minor brother, and promoted him as governor of Azerbaijan. He also granted an audience—according to the chronicler Abdurazak Samarkandi—to emissaries from “Firenk”, Egypt and Damascus (*Şam*), who brought him gifts.<sup>104</sup> The “Frank” mentioned in the Persian source was a reminiscence of the diplomatic links settled between Sigismund of Luxemburg and the intrepid Kara Yülük Osman Beğ. As an answer to a Hungarian mission, the first Ak Koyunlu embassy arrived at the court of the Hungarian king in 1430, whose mission is presented in the letter brought by the Eastern envoy. The Asian partner announced the victory of the “Persian king” (*König von Persien*) over Iskender and the plan of Timur’s successor to “advance with all his forces against the Turks in the following spring or summer <1431>”, and then, after settling the problems there, to head towards Syria, that belongs to the Sultan and where Damascus lies”.<sup>105</sup> Kara Yülük’s plan was to extend the Timurid expedition from Azerbaijan into Ottoman Anatolia<sup>106</sup> and Mamluk Syria and to synchronize it with a Christian offensive against the Ottomans at the Danube was not in accordance with the role envisioned by Shah Rukh for Murād, as the main pawn in his plan to conquer Egypt.

As the Ak Koyunlu Turkmen experiment of 1421, the solution of 1430, to install a member of the Turkmen Kara Koyunlu dynasty as a Timurid puppet,

103 Feridun Beğ, *Munşeat*, vol. I, second edition, 185–186.

104 A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, 621–622.

105 Wolfgang von Strome, “Diplomatische Kontakte des Herrschers vom Weissen Hammel, Uthman gennant Qara Yuluq, mit dem Deutschen König Sigismund im September 1430–März 1431 zu gemeinsamem Vorgehen mit dem Timuriden Schah-Ruch gegen die Türken”, *Südost Forschungen*, 20 (1961), pp. 268–269.

106 No Oriental source (Ottoman, Persian or Arab) presents details upon Kara Yülük’s connections with Sigismund of Luxemburg. Only a “Historical Calendar” (*Istanbul’un*, O. Turan, pp. 26–27) mentions Kara Yülük’s role as an instigator of the Timurid campaign.

with the intention of causing dissent within this clan, was not realistic. The Timurid solution for Azerbaijan had no effect, since Iskender came back shortly after the Timurids evacuated the area, captured Tabriz and killed Abu Said.<sup>107</sup>

The last Timurid expedition into Azerbaijan took place in 1435, at the request of Emir Khalil Allah Shirvanshah of Shirvan, whose territories, although under Timurid protection, were the permanent subject of Iskender's raids. Unlike the previous campaigns, when the third one took place the relations between the Ottoman state and the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt had worsened. Murād II had offered shelter to the rebel Canibeğ Sufi, a pretender to the throne in Cairo, and openly supported the Emir of Dulkadir in his war against the Emir of Karamania. The later was Barsbay's ally, since the Egyptian Sultan wanted to turn Karamania into a bastion against the Ottomans.<sup>108</sup>

Shah Rukh entered Tabriz in July 1435, while his son, Mehmed Cuki, pursued Iskender until Erzincan.<sup>109</sup> The Timurid troops reoccupied Azerbaijan and Shah Rukh once again set his winter camp in Karabakh. From here, he sent ambassadors to the enemies of Egypt, Sultan Murād II and Nasreddin Mehmed, Emir of Dulkadir. The Timurid embassy to Brusa was led by Nureddin b. Muşideddin Sheikh Cünayd Kazaruni.<sup>110</sup> The result of this mission—as presented by the Arab annals—was the acceptance by Murād II and the Emir Nasreddin Mehmed of the kaftan (*hulat*) offered by Shah Rukh, a sign of vassalage in the Turk-Mongol tradition that caused great turmoil in Cairo. The Mamluk policy saw the Timurid success as a part of Shah Rukh's project to gain new allies against Egypt.<sup>111</sup> At the beginning of 1436, a much-expected rumour circulated across Christian Europe that the "Lord of Tatars" will descend with 150,000 horsemen and infantrymen upon Murād II.<sup>112</sup> This news was fake as those spread by the Venetians in 1429.

107 R.M. Savory, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Timur", *Der Islam*, 40 (1964), p. 41.

108 In April 1435, Barsbay ordered the emir of Aleppo to support with his troops Ibrahim, the Emir of Karamania, in order to capture the fortress of Kayseri from the Dulkadirids, Makrizi, *Kitab us-suluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. IV, p. 945.

109 A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, p. 685.

110 *Ibidem*, p. 687. The negotiations between the Sultan and the Oriental envoys are presented in the letter sent from Constantinople, in November 1436, by Giovanni di Ragusa to the Council of Basel, N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, vol. IV, doc. XVII, pp. 25–30.

111 Makrizi, *Kitab us-suluk*, ed. S.A. Aşur, vol. IV, 957–963; *History of Egypt, 1382–1469 A.D.*, Part IV, 1422–1438 A.D., ed. W. Popper, p. 127.

112 In a letter addressed to Sigismund by the inhabitants of Ragusa, dated 29 February 1436, there is news that "magnum Tamberlanum dominum Tartarorum descendisse contra dominum Teucrum in Nataliam usque ad Candelor cum 150 milibus equitum et peditum",

Shah Rukh lost the most loyal ally of the Timurids, the nonagenarian Kara Yülük, who was defeated and killed by Iskender near Erzurum.<sup>113</sup> But the unity of his adversary, the Kara Koyunlu clan, was shattered again when Isfend, Iskender's brother, became Shah Rukh's vassal and was installed as Timurid governor in Baghdad. This gesture was followed by his minor brothers, Cihan Shah and Shah Mehemmed. In the spring of 1436, before leaving Azerbaijan, Shah Rukh entrusted the government of the province to Cihan Shah.<sup>114</sup>

Once taking the leadership of the Kara Koyunlu confederation, in 1437, Cihan Shah maintained cordial relations both with Shah Rukh and Murād II, therefore allowing Azerbaijan to become once more the main commercial link between Persia and the ports to the Black Sea and a supplier for the Anatolian land routes. After Shah Rukh's demise, the Timurid Empire entered a swift decline and the Timurids final attempt to return to Azerbaijan was stopped by Uzun Hassan (1453–1478), the leader of the Ak Koyunlu confederation.

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J. Gelcich, L. Thallóczy (eds.) *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae*, (Budapest, 1887), doc. 243, pp. 395–396.

113 I. Erdem, "Ak-Koyunlu devletinin kurucusu Kara-Yülük Osman Bey'in hayatı ve faaliyetleri (?–1435)", *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, pp. 107–108.

114 A. Samarkandi, *Matla-i*, ed. M. Şafi, vol. II, 1987, p. 690.

# The Principality of Theodoro (Mangup) and Stephen the Great's Moldavia: Observations and Hypotheses

Ștefan S. Gorovei

Among the directions followed by Stephen the Great in his foreign policy, the one historians call “the Black Sea policy” may reserve the most unexpected and unbelievable surprises, the kind that can disturb the adepts of “political correctness”. Older (from N. Iorga and Gheorghe I. Brătianu) and newer contributions—of the latter, those of historians Șerban Papacostea and Ștefan Andreescu—emphasized the constant interest with which the Moldavian ruler watched the evolutions of the events in the Black Sea, given the intricate network of connexions in the general policy from this part of Europe during the 7–9th decades of the 15th century. *An economical interest*—some would say—considering the detailed provisions of the trade agreements, the so-called privileges that regulated the flow of goods between Lviv and Cetatea Albă (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiyi), but also some of the actions of the Moldavian ruler.<sup>1</sup> *A military interest*—others would say—drawn by the military campaigns of a prince who wasn't, however, “a poet of wars” (N. Iorga's expression). We cannot deny that there is some truth in both these interpretations. Nevertheless, I do believe that the sources—those still available today—allow a higher interpretation of this interest, also implying, in a coherent relationship, other types of information concerning Stephen the Great's *political creation*.

In order to directly and precisely shape the frame for the current observations, I will refer to Gheorghe I. Brătianu, the historian to whom we owe—in my opinion—the very correlation between the expression *Black Sea policy* and the name of Stephen the Great. Here's what Brătianu said, in his lecture of 1941–1942, about *the Black Sea Question*: “Stephen the Great had a *Black Sea policy*. This was demonstrated by our historians [...]. I do believe that this aspect played a very important part in the policy of the Moldavian voivode that [...] Mr E. Turdeanu rightfully called as a time of crusade. Let us not forget that

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1 See, in this way, the clarifying observations presented by Șerban Papacostea, “Începuturile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei (sec. XIV–XVI). Drum și stat,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 10 (1983), pp. 46–49; Papacostea, “Comerț, alianțe și acțiune militară în politica lui Ștefan cel Mare la începuturile domniei 1457–1462,” *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2004), pp. 445–454.

Stephen the Great married Mary of Mangup, who was the sister of the lords of Mangup [...] and therefore related through them with the lords of Trebizond; and the wife of Uzun Hasan, Despina, was from the Komnenoi family of Trebizond. She urged her husband to come to the aid of the Christians. This is how, through the Crimea, there was a link between Moldavia, the rulers of Mangup, the Komnenoi of Trebizond and Persia. Here's the framework of the *political system* within which Stephen the Great fought during his wars with the Turks [...] But more than this, he effectively took part in the fights from the Crimea. At some point, seeing that *the lord of Mangup wasn't integrated into his policy* and did not follow his directives, he sent the brother of his wife, Alexander, who killed the other brother who ruled in the Crimea, took over Mangup and was escorted there by a Moldavian contingent. Among the last defenders of Mangup against the Turks were 300 Moldavian soldiers ..."<sup>2</sup>

A few years later, in the book dedicated to the Black Sea, mentioning the same facts of 1475, the historian presented a definitive conclusion: "il peut donc être question sans aucune exagération de la *politique pontique* d'Etienne le Grand" ("we can therefore discuss without any exaggeration about Stephen the Great's *Black Sea policy*").<sup>3</sup>

These general conclusions seem extremely cautious when compared to the categorical opinion presented by A.A. Vasiliev in 1936, referring to "the ambitious plans [of Stephen, *n.a.*] of exercising exceptional influence on Gothia [= the Crimea] and finally perhaps even of taking possession of the Crimean Principality".<sup>4</sup> Subscribing to this opinion (with a more reserved attitude however), Ștefan Andreescu wrote recently: "In the case of Stephen the Great of Moldavia we can discuss without hesitation about an ample Black Sea policy, for he did not only extend his authority towards the shore of the Black Sea, from the Dniester Estuary until the Mouth of the Danube, but he even tried,

2 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Chestiunea Mării Negre*, (Bucharest, 1941), 607–608; Brătianu, *Marea Neagră de la origini la cucerirea otomană*, ed. Victor Spinei (Iași: Polirom, 1999), pp. 439–440, note 47; underlined by the author.

3 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *La Mer Noire des origines à la conquête ottomane*, (Munchen: Societatea Academică Română, 1969), p. 323; Brătianu, *Marea Neagră*, p. 428.

4 A.A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America 1936), p. 244: "... through his marriage to Mary of Mangup, Stephen the Great had ambitious plans of exercising exceptional influence on Gothia and finally perhaps even of taking possession of the Crimean Principality" (underlined by the author). See also Alexander Gertsen, Nadezhda Gertsen, "Moldova și principatul Theodoro la 1475," *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2004), pp. 145–146.

through a matrimonial alliance, to impose his hegemony upon the Principality of Mangup, in Southern Crimea".<sup>5</sup>

I would like to insist upon some more discrete—at first sight—aspects of this “ample policy”.

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I believe that the best text to serve as a starting point in deciphering the hidden realities of this domain is the message sent by Stephen the Great to Venice<sup>6</sup> through his wife's uncle, Ioannes TzAMPLAKON. In the well-known passage about the importance of Cetatea Albă and Kilia—Black Sea fortresses whose “lands are the entire Moldavia and Moldavia with these lands is a wall for Hungary and for Poland”—Stephen also added: “I say even more, that if the two cities were to be kept, it will be possible for the Turks to lose both Caffa and the Chersonesus”.<sup>7</sup>

These words seem to indicate a particular interest of the Moldavian ruler for the two fortresses. The clearest explanation of Stephen's policy was formulated three decades ago, in the form of a perfect equation, by Șerban PAPACOSTEA: “[il] avait compris que seul un renversement de la situation en Crimée était à la longue en mesure de lui permettre de sauvegarder les positions de la Moldavie à la Mer Noire et au Bas-Danube” (“[he] had realized that only a reversal in the question of the Crimea would allow him to keep Moldavia's possessions at the Black Sea and Lower Danube”);<sup>8</sup> as such, Stephen “faisait communiquer à Venise son intention de tenter de chasser les Turcs de Caffa et de l'ensemble de la région” (“notified Venice of his intention to try to chase the Turks out of Caffa and the whole region”).<sup>9</sup> Thus formulated, the explanation provides the necessary general frame to understand the actions. The details, however, are still unclear: how did Stephen plan to “turn the tide in the Crimea”? What actions did he consider necessary to “chase the Turks out of Caffa and the whole region”? And most of all, why did he inform Venice and not Genoa of his intention?

5 Ștefan Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre. Genovezi, Români și Tătari în spațiul pontic în sec. XIV–XVII*, (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 2001), p. 8; see also p. 124.

6 See also Șerban Papacostea, “Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare și genovezii din Marea Neagră,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A. D. Xenopol*, 29 (1992): p. 73.

7 Gheorghe Mihăilă, “Importanța politică și literară a corespondenței lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Veneția,” in Mihăilă, *Contribuții la istoria culturii și literaturii române vechi*, (Bucharest: Minerva, 1972), p. 182.

8 Șerban Papacostea, “Caffa et la Moldavie face à l'expansion ottoman 1453–1484,” in *Genovezii la Marea Neagră în sec. XIII–XIV*, (Bucharest: Academiei, 1977), pp. 151–152.

9 *Ibid.* p. 152.

Stephen the Great's interest for Caffa may seem unexpected, but it is confirmed by Jan Długosz, the contemporary Polish analyst (†1480) who was genuinely preoccupied with his actions. Recalling the arrival of the ship with the young Genoese taken prisoners by the Ottoman army after the fall of Caffa aboard, Długosz says that "filled with an immense joy, Stephen had begun to hope that he could reconquer Caffa".<sup>10</sup> This information, attributed to the summer of 1475,<sup>11</sup> presents two ambiguities. One—the causal link suspected by the Polish analyst—can easily be removed, since it is unacceptable: an experienced political and military leader, as the Moldavian voivode already was at that time, couldn't have placed his hopes or build plans based on a completely random and irrelevant event. Moreover, the fate he reserved for the young Genoese<sup>12</sup> speaks for itself: had he considered to use them in a project of liberating Caffa,<sup>13</sup> he wouldn't have kept them captive or sent them home for a significant amount of money payed as ransom.

The second ambiguity, however, stays. Długosz's account doesn't present, apparently, Stephen's intentions concerning the freed Caffa. As in other situations, I believe this concerns a precious information, misinterpreted by the translators. Indeed, the two Romanian versions of this phrase—that of N. Orghidan of 1915 and that of Radu Constantinescu of 1977—do not present the precise meaning of the Latin phrase, because they surprisingly overlook two words. Here's Długosz's text: "Qua re Stephanus supra modum exhilarates, sperum recuperandae Caphae, suapte sponte magnam, in animum induxit".<sup>14</sup> We can observe that *suapte sponte* was not translated. And it's precisely these

10 Translated by N. Orghidan, 1915, reproduced in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, (Putna, 2004), p. 168. Translated by Radu Constantinescu in 1977: "Over-joyous, Stephen started to believe that he could reconquer Caffa" in *Războieni. 500 de ani de la Campania din 1476*, ed. Manole Neagoe (Bucharest: Arhivele Statului, 1977), p. 242.

11 In the *Moldavian-German Chronicle*, the event is placed in a fully erroneous chronological context, apparently in 1474, in the month of February—*Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan*, ed. P.P. Panaitescu, (Bucharest: Academiei, 1959), pp. 32–33. Since this chronicle is the only one that relates the event, we must accept that the information was extracted from another source, perhaps another chronicle or an oral statement of a witness. The date of February 9th for the fall of Caffa is, however, a complete mystery. See also Ștefan Andreescu, "Ultima fază a raporturilor dintre oldova și Genova," in Andreescu, *Din istoria*, pp. 128–129.

12 *Ibid.* pp. 130–139.

13 I do not share the supposition formulated—most cautiously, however—by Șerban Papacostea, i.e. that the plan of liberation ("restoration") concerning "Caffa and the whole Crimea", exposed by the envoy to Venice in 1477, "explains perhaps the detention in Moldavia of the group of young Genoese from Caffa who escaped in Moldavia from a Turkish ship" (Papacostea, *Caffa*, p. 73).

14 Neagoe, *Războieni*, p. 236.

two words that hold the key in understanding Stephen's intentions during the summer of 1475.<sup>15</sup> He wanted to free Caffa *with his own forces*, which means that, *in the eventuality of a victory, he would have kept the city*. In other words, *this was not a simple liberation with Moldavian help, preparing a Genoese restoration*.

In the light of these clarifications, we should read the message sent in 1477 to Venice one more time, considering the possibility that “the Turks could lose both Caffa and the Chersonesus”.

The mention of the names of the two cities reveals, in my opinion, a project whose magnitude was hard to suspect. Chersonesus was situated in the Western extremity of the Southern coast of the Crimea, while Caffa was located on the opposite side, at a great distance upwards. And beyond the Eastern extremity of this coast, across the Kerch Strait, in the Taman peninsula, was the principality of Matrega, whose ruler, Zaccaria de Ghisolfi, maintained diplomatic relations with the Moldavian prince—about which, unfortunately, we know very little.<sup>16</sup>

Very recently, I've formulated a hypothesis according to which “the mention of Chersonesus [in the message sent to Venice through Ioannes Tzemplakon] might be a clue that the court in Suceava hadn't renounced to its claim on the Crimean succession”.<sup>17</sup> Today, I believe I can expand this hypothesis that was gradually consolidated by several arguments and pieces of information.

Although it is unusual to explicitly state that the authority of the princes of Mangup was extended also over Chersonesus<sup>18</sup>—that had no strategic

15 For the same period, there is another testimony that demonstrates Stephen's interest for the event in the Crimea: the envoy sent, during the summer or autumn of 1475, to Moscow, marking the beginning—I believe—of our relations with Ivan III. Reminding the grand prince about the Christian principalities which “the Lord has placed under the heathens for our sins”, Stephen added this warning: “And now the Turks have crossed the Black Sea and took Caffa. Therefore, we must be wary”. The document was published in *Relațiile istorice dintre popoarele U.R.S.S. și România sec. XV–XVIII*, (Moscow, 1965), 62–63, no. 9. For the chronology, see Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2005), p. 133, note 210.

16 Ștefan Andreescu, “Ștefan cel Mare al Moldovei și Zaccaria Ghizolfi, seniorul din Matrega. Câteva note despre relațiile lor,” *Analele Putnei*, 1 (2005), pp. 115–121.

17 Cf. Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Maria Asanina Paleologhina doamna Moldovlahiei,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 22 (2004): p. 46, note 200.

18 The direct question addressed to Tatiana Yashaeva (April 2004) received a negative answer. See also Tatiana Yashaeva, “Chersonul și împrejurimile sale de la sfârșitul secolului XIV până în secolul XVI”, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2004), p. 137: “In the Northeast, Chersonesus was close to the domains of the principality of Theodoro ...”.



importance at the time and was reduced to a simple fishing village<sup>19</sup>—a connection can be made to sustain the opposite.

Towards the end of the 18th century, an undated and strange looking fragment from an inscription was found among the ruins of Chersonesus: three false heart-shaped shields (oval cartridges) with strange drawings, resembling woven letters, under a text fragment in Greek, containing the name of Chersonesus—τὸ κάστρον τῆς Χερσῶνους.<sup>20</sup> The stone seems to have disappeared subsequently, but a very good drawing of it was published in 1801.<sup>21</sup> As long as the content of the oval cartridges was not deciphered, one could have supposed that the stone dated from the first half of the 15th century, perhaps even from the reign of prince Alexius,<sup>22</sup> the alleged grandfather of lady Mary. The deciphering of the monograms from the three oval cartridges<sup>23</sup> began in 1937 and was finished in 2001. In the first instance, after reviewing the book of A.A. Vasiliev, A.V. Soloviev read in the first two cartridges the names of Isaac and Manuel;<sup>24</sup> in 2001, I was fortunate enough to read the third name—Melchizedek.<sup>25</sup> Besides, these three names can be found together in a Moldavian source, perfectly dated, i.e. the diptych of the Bistrița Monastery, in a paragraph called “of Mangup”,<sup>26</sup> whose close analysis allowed the conclusion that *Manuel was the father of lady Mary*.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, the princes of Mangup exerted their authority and control over Chersonesus, commanding the construction there, around (or immediately after) the middle of the 15th century, of a structure (difficult to state its nature: might have been a fort) on which they placed their names in monograms. And among these princes was also the father of Mary Paleologhina, the wife

19 Ibid. pp. 136–137.

20 The previous letters apparently form the word λεγόμενον.

21 P.S. Pallas, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südlichen Statthaltschaften des russischen Reichs in den Jahren 1793 und 1794*, vol. 2, (Leipzig: Gottfried Martini, 1801), p. 54. I haven't seen this work and I am quoting it after N.V. Malickij, “Заметки по эпиграфике Мангупа”, in *Известия Государственной Академии Истории Материальной Культуры*, 71 (1933), p. 36 and Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 216, note 8.

22 Malickij, “Заметки”, pp. 36–37 and 46 (in the French summary); Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 217.

23 Overall, the deciphering of the monograms of Mangup began in 1900, when Gabriel Millet, after reviewing Latyshev's catalogue of inscriptions, read the monogram of Alexius (“Bulletin Critique”, year 21, no. 28, 5 October 1900)—apud Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 217, note 3.

24 A.V. Soloviev, “Спорные вопросы по истории Готского княжества в Крыму. По поводу книги А.А. Васьи́ева, *The Goths ...*”, *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, 9 (1937), p. 99.

25 Gorovei, “Maria Asanina Paleologhina”, pp. 24–25.

26 Damian P. Bogdan (ed.), *Pomelnicul mănăstirii Bistrița* (Bucharest, 1941), p. 50 (Slavonic text) and 86 (Romanian translation).

27 Gorovei, “Maria Asanina Paleologhina”, pp. 27–28.

of Stephen the Great. The assumption that the mentioning of Chersonesus in 1477 implied or reflected the claim on the Crimean succession turns out to be correct and gains, in this situation, not only a plausible, but also a convincing interpretation.

There is, however, an unaddressed question concerning the Black Sea policy of Stephen the Great, a question which I consider of paramount importance for this research: what was Mangup's significance at the time when Stephen married its "princess"?

When this marriage was—probably—already arranged, on 6 June 1472, Genoa sent instructions to the consul of Caffa, Antoniotto de Gabella (Cabella), regarding the attitude that the great Crimean colony had to have—after the fall of Constantinople—towards those interested and taking part in the Black Sea trade, abandoning all conflicts and favouring peaceful relations: "sunt in mare illo pontico inter ceteras tres dominationes, quarum subditi magnum commercium habent cum populis Caphensibus et reliquis ditioni nostre subiectis: videlicet, dominus imperator tartarorum, dominus Tedor et fratres eius, ac dominus sive communitas Mocastri".<sup>28</sup> In other words, the Tatar Khan (Mengli Girey), the prince of Mangup (Isaac or Isaico) and Cetatea Albă, i.e. Moldavia. 14 years earlier, on 8 February 1458 (during the first year of Stephen's reign), Caffa had received similar instructions, formulated identically (which proves the existence of a form or its copying from the registers of the chancellery); the powers of the Black Sea ("quator dominationes") were, at the time, represented by the "imperator tartarorum, imperator trapezundarum, dominus Tedor et fratres eius, ac dominus sive communitas Mocastri"<sup>29</sup>—the Tatar khan (Agi I Girey, khan until 1466), the Great Komnenos of Trebizond,<sup>30</sup> the prince of Mangup<sup>31</sup> and the ruler of Moldavia. If the mentions of the khan,

28 Nicolae Iorga, *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, III, (Bucharest, 1897), 50.

29 Virginie Vasiliu, "Sur la seigneurie de Teodoro en Crimée au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle à l'occasion d'un nouveau document", *Mélanges de l'Ecole roumaine en France*, 1929, p. 302. The document is dated 8 February 1458; Nicolae Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chilie și Cetății Albe*, (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1899), 121 and mirrors "the ample trade—*magnum commercium*—maintained by the four Black Sea powers with the inhabitants of Caffa and the other nations under Genoese domination".

30 John IV Great Komnenos, who died in the spring of 1460 cf. Thierry Ganchou, "La date de la mort du basileus Jean IV Komnenos de Trebizonde", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 93 (2000), pp. 113–124, the father of Despina Theodora, wife of Uzun Hasan and the brother of the last emperor, David II, who married (in 1429) the *vasilissa* (*empress*) Mary of Gothia, daughter of "kyr Alexios" of Theodoro, most likely an aunt of Stephen the Great's lady—cf. Ștefan S. Gorovei, "Maria Asanina Paleologhina", pp. 31–32 and notes 120–121.

31 Probably Olobei, mentioned as "dominus Thedorii" also on 24 March 1458 (Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 237).

Cetatea Albă or the emperor of Trebizond (who left the competition in 1461) are understandable, the presence of the prince of Theodoro among the powers showing interest for the Black Sea trade may seem unusual. Indeed, the modern term of Mangup only designates a fortress erected almost 600 m above sea level, on a huge and remote plateau between the Crimean Mountains, far from the shore. The most significant prince of Theodoro, Alexius, built a port at Calamita (present Inkerman) which, however, could not turn his principality into a Black Sea power. The inclusion of Mangup among the “powers” (*dominationes*) with which Caffa was advised to maintain peaceful relations can only be justified if the principality was, through his territory, fortresses or ports, at the same level as Trebizond, Moldavia or the khanate. In other words, if it had the means to participate at and influence the Black Sea trade.

Most likely, our vision about the principality of Theodoro is wrong and I don't think that we can fully understand Stephen the Great's policy between 1472 and 1477 (perhaps even until 1482) without a somewhat clearer image of this state's significance.

Soviet researches from the 60s reached the conclusion that the authority of the princes of Theodoro extended, after the first half of the 15th century, over a large part of Crimea's Southern shore, from the Northern side of the gulf where the port of Calamita was situated, until far away, towards Soldaia (present Sudak), until—according to these researches—the present town of Rybachye.<sup>32</sup>

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32 E.V. Веймарн, “О двух неясных вопросах средневековья юго-западного Крыма, II. О территории Мангупского княжества во второй половине XV века”, *Археологические исследования средневекового Крыма*, (Kiev, 1968), p. 79—the map. The reconstitution proposed by the author is based on the assumption that the territory of the former principality was included in the Mangup kadylyk (organised after 1475), including the “Gothia Capitanate”. This hypothesis is strongly supported by conclusions from two opposed chronological directions. On the one hand, referring to the situation in the Crimea prior to 1000, a Ukrainian researcher proved that the written sources and archaeological data “permettent de situer le pays des Goths dans les montagnes au sud-est de la Crimée, avec des points d'appui sur la côte sud, principalement les deux forteresses érigées par Justinien 1<sup>er</sup>, Gorzouvitae (Gourzouf de nos jours) et Alouston (Alouchta). Quant au nom du pays, Dory, donné par Procope, il est manifestement en rapport avec le nom de la capitale de la Gothie, Doros, donné par plusieurs sources. Ce lieu est identifié au site montagneux de Mangoup, à une trentaine de kilomètres à l'est de la ville de Cherson” (see N.A. Alekseenko, “Un tourmarque de Gothie sur un sceau inédit de Cherson”, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 54 (1996), pp. 272–273). On the other hand, two Ottoman censuses from the first half of the 16th century (around 1529 and 1545) show that several seaside towns, such as Gurzuf and Partenit, were indeed part of the Mangup “district”—Alan Fisher, “The Ottoman Crimea in the Sixteenth Century”, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 5 (1981), pp. 135–170 (see 155 and 165). Given that these observations were not invalidated

Although this reconstitution is presented as hypothetical, I consider the map presented here to be correct (maintaining, of course, the relative character of its details). Therefore, this was the principality of Mary Asanina Paleologhina; this is the principality that Stephen the Great tried to save in 1475 from the Ottoman conquest. *It was far more than a small domain, reduced to a fortified settlement high in the mountains.* And we must admit that, in this situation, the definition of Mangup from the *Moldavian-Polish Chronicle*—“Christian realm”—becomes understandable and takes on a new meaning.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, this hypothetical reconstitution is supported also by another element, not used by its author: the inclusion of the term of *parathalassia*, “the land by the sea”, in the title carved by Alexius in his inscriptions from 1425 and 1427—“Lord of the city of Theodoro and of Parathalassia”. As Ștefan Andreescu pointed out a few years ago, in this title the formula “land by the sea” (*parathalassia*) “couldn’t cover only the modest reality of the modest reality of the port of Calamita, built by Alexius himself ...”.<sup>34</sup>

Known documents clearly show the expansionist policy of the ruling family of Mangup. Alexius himself, after gaining the throne, apparently with Genoese support,<sup>35</sup> around 1410 or 1411,<sup>36</sup> or even earlier,<sup>37</sup> attacked and occupied Cembalo, in 1422, that was considered “caput totius Gothie”.<sup>38</sup> Two years later, the Genoese reconquered Cembalo,<sup>39</sup> only to lose it again, in February 1433,<sup>40</sup>

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by other researches, the following commentary seems unfounded: “the little Byzantine principality of Mangoup in the Crimea was little more than an offshoot of the Genoese colonies on the Crimean coast” see David Nicolle, *Constantinople 1453: A Bloody End to Empire*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000), p. 9.

33 *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 170 (Polish text) and 179 (Romanian translation).

34 Ștefan Andreescu, “O icoană dispărută și un titlu domnesc”, *Revista Istorică*, 11 (2000): p. 103.

35 *Ibid.*: 227 and note 4, quoting Aldo Agosto, “Nuovi reperti archivistici genovesi dell’ ‘Officium provisionis Romaniae’ sulla Guerra di Cembalo (1434)”, *ByzantinoBulgarica*, 7 (1981), p. 107.

36 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 202 (“Alexis began to rule in or shortly before this year”).

37 Regarding the first part of the reign of Alexius, see, recently, Thierry Ganchou, Alina Minghiraș, “Un nouveau document à propos d’Alexios de Théodoro-Mangoup”, *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, eds. Ionel Căndea, Paul Cernovodeanu and Gheorghe Lazăr, (Brăila: Istros, 2003), pp. 113–114. The document published here (118) testified to the excellent relations between Caffa and Alexius in the spring of 1411. A fragment from an inscription, dated *April 6911* (1403), reproduced by N.V. Malickij, “Заметки”, p. 25, isn’t, however, relevant for the beginning of the reign of Alexius, as this historian believed, as well as Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 216.

38 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 202 and note 6.

39 *Ibid.* p. 203.

40 *Ibid.* pp. 206–207 and 207, note 1.

during the Veneto-Genoese war that started in 1431,<sup>41</sup> which favoured the organisation of a riot that represented “one of the most serious crises of the Genoese hegemony in the Black Sea”.<sup>42</sup> During this period (1424–1433), the prince from Theodoro called himself Lord of Parathalassia (the inscriptions of 1425 and 1427) and was called *dominus Gothie* by the Venetians.<sup>43</sup> Was this only a pretentious title taken by Alexius and were the Venetians only flattering him for some services he had promised? Probably not: during the same period, in 1427, Damian, “Metropolitan of Theodoro and All Gothia”, reconstructed a church in the city of Parthenitae (present Partenit),<sup>44</sup> situated far to the West from Mangup; it seems logical to me that, in order to start this reconstruction, the aforementioned settlement had to be under his jurisdiction—“All Gothia”—, whose extent had to correspond strictly—from a canonical point of view—with the political authority of the lord from Theodoro.<sup>45</sup> Given these conditions, it is obvious that, although he had lost Cembalo, *Alexius kept Gothia, i.e. the land by the sea, “Parathalassia”*. It is also obvious that, in the geopolitical language of that time, Gothia was precisely the land by the sea, the *parathalassia* from the titles of Alexius and his metropolitan. According to the treaty of 27 November 1380, the Golden Horde had ceded that territory to Genoa: “Gothia, with its villages and its Christian people, from Cembalo to Soldaia, shall belong to the Great Commune [= Genoa] and the aforementioned villages and the people with its lands and waters shall be free”.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Alexius conquered it from the Genoese, along with “caput totius Gothie”, thereby becoming—along with his successors—*Lord of Gothia*.

The proof that this territory remained under the authority of the princes of Theodoro also after the death of Alexius is provided by the (already mentioned) instructions sent from Genoa to Caffa in 1458. Even while recommending (due to the Ottoman danger) peaceful relations with “dominus Tedori et fratres ejus”, Genoa didn’t forget that they had unjustly occupied Gothia—“indebite

41 Ibid. p. 205. See also Brătianu, *Mare Neagră*, pp. 412–414.

42 For these events, see Șerban Papacostea, “Une révolte antigénoise en Mer Noire et la riposte de Gênes, 1433–1434”, *Il Mar Nero*, 1 (1994), pp. 279–290.

43 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 206, note 1.

44 Ibid. p. 278.

45 Damian’s inscription from Partenit (dated 10 September 6936) was also mentioned, in the attempt to determine the extent of the possessions of the Mangup princes, by Веймарн, “О двух неясных вопросах средневековья юго-западного Крыма”, p. 80.

46 Virgil Ciociltan, “Restaurația Hoardei de Aur și tratatele tătarogenoveze din anii 1380–1387”, *Revista Istorică*, 1 (1990), p. 580 (quoting Silvestre de Sacy, “Pièces diplomatiques tirées des archives de la République de Gênes”, in *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, vol. 11, (Paris, 1827), 54). See also Ciociltan, “Reichspolitik und Handel: die tatarisch-genuesischen Verträge von 1380–1387”, *Il Mar Nero*, 1 (1994), pp. 261–278.

occupant Gotiam ad urbem Caphe pertinentem”—and, despite Caffa’s rights, had erected the port of Calamita, thereby diminishing the incomes of their colony: “contraque jura et privilegia portum in Calamita publice fieri faciunt et ibidem navigia onerare et exonerare in gravem jacturam vectigaluum Caphe”. Restoring the situation in the interest of the Genoese was up to the inhabitants of Caffa, depending on the eventuality of favorable moments.<sup>47</sup> However, until the disaster of 1475 this situation didn’t change and the Protectors of the San Giorgio Bank ended up by referring to the lord of Mangup with the same title, “dominus Gotie”,<sup>48</sup> just as the authorities of Caffa.<sup>49</sup>

In this context, I believe that the information from the two sources that were at the origin of the present observations—Długosz’s account and the message carried by TzAMPLAKON—allows a reasonably coherent explanation.

In the summer of 1475, after his great victory at Vaslui and given the strong resistance in Mangup, where he had already sent an expeditionary corps of 300 soldiers, Stephen was able to forge the plan of an expedition to Caffa, in order to free and keep the city, as a distant bridgehead and part of Gothia, which had finally entered his political system under the rule of prince Alexander.

In December 1475, however, Mangup fell. The followed 1476, marked by the arduous—diplomatic and military—preparation against a future Ottoman expedition, Valea Albă, a battle that was first undecided but finally turned out favourable for the lord of Moldavia, the restoration of Vlad Țepeș on the throne of Wallachia and his fall afterwards, in December 1476.

The message sent to Venice in the spring of the following year, 1477, can be deciphered—as I consider—in another light if we take into account the old rivalry between the Genoese and the Venetians for the Black Sea. Reiterating the possibility of freeing Caffa, alongside Chersonesus—this time—, Stephen suggested, perhaps, that Venice should rule the great city,<sup>50</sup> while he would

47 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 235, note 1.

48 Ibid. 236, footnote 2 (the letter of January 21, 1471); 245, footnote 2 (19 August 1474: “domini Gotie”). It is worth noting the over a century old observation of Alexandru Papadopol-Calimach: “The title of these lords [from Mangup], according to the old Genoese chronicles, was *Signori de lo Teodoro et Domini Gothiae*” see Alexandru Papadopol-Calimach, “Sofia Paleolog, nepoata împăratului Constantin XI Paleolog și domnița Olena, fiica domnului Moldovei Ștefan cel Mare 1472–1509,” *Academia Română. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, s. II, 17 (1895), p. 110.

49 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, 242, p. note 2 (10 February 1475: Isaac “dominus Theodori et Gothie”); Papacostea, “Moldova”, p. 72.

50 Such an eventuality was overlooked by the researchers of this stage in the Moldavian-Venetian relationships see Șerban Papacostea, “Venise et les Pays Roumains au Moyen Age,” in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo xv*, ed. Agostino Pertusi, (Florence: Olshki, 1973), pp. 615–624; Eugen Denize, *România între Leu și Semilună. Războaiele turco-venețiene și*

take his wife's inheritance—Theodoro and Gothia, i.e. the shoreline from Chersonesus to Soldaia.

A careful reading of Ioannes Tzamlakon's instructions shows that the written text was joined by an oral exposition; after he evoked the possibility of freeing Caffa and Chersonesus, Stephen added: "And this would be easy; I will not say how this can be achieved, so not to lengthen the letter. *If you shall ask, I will show you*". We cannot doubt the fact that the Venetian Senate *asked*, and Tzamlakon *showed*. And he did so *extensively*, since it was written that the messenger's exposition was "longo verborum ordine".<sup>51</sup>

This is a message that reveals the strategy of the Moldavian voivode, capable of embracing vast geographical areas and ample political and economic interests, alongside his own projects and aspirations. The importance of this message can explain, as I see it, even the choice of the messenger: a Tzamlakon, from an illustrious Byzantine noble family, closely related with the Palaiologoi after Michael VIII, but also with the princes of Theodoro. If such a project would have succeeded, Moldavia would have tripled (if not more) its coastline and would have had the possibility of controlling the Black Sea. This observation meets that of Ștefan Andreescu, formulated in a recent study, that clearly defined the importance of the Crimea, emphasizing that "it was and remained 'the cornerstone' for the control of the Black Sea coast, both during the 'Italian age' and during the time of the Ottomans";<sup>52</sup> besides, one of the testimonies used in this study, that of Niccolò Barsi, who explored the Crimea in the thirties of the 17th century, called it "the gate of the Black Sea" (*porta del mar Negro*).<sup>53</sup>

But this also means another manner of perceiving the Black Sea policy and strategies of the Moldavian voivode. "The coastline" he inherited—that made him able to control a significant section of the Black Sea coast, from Kilia and Cetatea Albă to the elusive Lerici<sup>54</sup>—could be ruled and defended by his own forces. In its (several times) extended form, through the possible annexation

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*influența lor asupra Țărilor Române sec. XV–XVI*, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2003), pp. 112–117.

51 Nicolae Iorga, "Veneția în Marea Neagră III. Originea legăturilor lui Ștefan cel Mare și mediul politic al dezvoltării lor," in Iorga, *Studii asupra evului mediu românesc*, ed. Ș. Papacostea, (Bucharest: Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984), p. 291.

52 Ștefan Andreescu, "Crimeea în viziunea observatorilor occidentali în sec. XVII–XVIII," in *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, eds. I. Căndea, P. Cernovodeanu and Gh. Lazăr, (Brăila: Istros, 2003), p. 674.

53 Ibid. p. 693.

54 Ștefan Andreescu, "Politica pontică a Moldovei: Ștefan cel Mare și castelul Illice," in Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre*, p. 123: "starting from January 1465, when Stephen managed to conquer the fortress of Kilia, Moldavia had a 'maritime front' [...] that stretched from the Danube to the Dnieper..."

of Gothia, Moldavia would have required the help of a naval power. His call on the Venetians could have had such an alliance in mind.

In this context, it has a great significance, in my view, that Pope Sixtus IV issued, precisely at the beginning of 1477, the bull *Redemptor noster*, which Liviu Pilat recently identified as part of the category “generally named *Bulla cruciata* by theologians—defined as a Papal bull against the infidels, that grants ample military, material or spiritual privileges”, and actually represented “the proclamation of a crusade in which the main part was reserved for the Moldavian voivode”.<sup>55</sup> It is impossible not to see a connection between these facts—about which, unfortunately, we have no additional information, neither from a Venetian, nor a Roman source.

However, it is understandable why such a project was no longer popular in the spring of 1477: almost a quarter of a century after the fall of Byzantium, finding a *modus vivendi* with the new masters of the Straits and, consequently, of the Black Sea, seemed to be more convenient than a war whose favourable outcome was increasingly distant. Venice herself was no longer active in the war against the Ottomans and was negotiating an agreement with the Porte, that will be concluded in October 1478 and turned into a peace treaty in April 1479.

On the other hand, at the end of the same year when the aforementioned message was sent to Venice, lady Mary died (19 December 1477). The last son from this marriage, Bogdan, in whose name Stephen could, eventually, claim the Crimean succession, died as an infant on 26 July 1479. In the same year, only a few months later (from April to July 1479), Stephen had also lost his most needed naval ally, as well as his last juridical claim on Gothia. We must, however, note that he sheltered until the end the members of the ruling family of Mangup who took refuge in Moldavia, like a certain Vlad, who died and was buried in Suceava in 1480.<sup>56</sup>

55 Liviu Pilat, “Redemptor noster. Moldova și Republica Christiana la 1476–1477”, *Analele Putnei*, 2 (2006): 137–144.

56 Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Din legăturile dintre Moldova și Crimeea în secolul al XV-lea. Pe marginea unei inscripții grecești,” in *Omagiu lui P. Constantinescu-Iași cu prilejul împlinirii a 70 de ani*, (Bucharest: Academiei, 1965), pp. 261–262. Vlad was the counsellor of Isaac, the prince replaced by Stephen in the spring of 1475. Isaac’s title—αυθέντης Θεοδώρων και πάσης Χαζαρίας—reminds us of that given by Ioannes Eugenikos to John, son of Alexius “the Great” and the father of the young Alexius, who was buried in Trebizond: αυθέντης Χαζαρίας. The use of the same term in the title of the princes of Theodoro seems to contradict its recent explanation: “The term of *Gazaria*, frequently mentioned in the Genoese documents, doesn’t refer, as most interpreters consider, only to the Crimea, even when it is presented without any other references, but to the entire Golden Horde” (Ciociltan, “Restaurația”, p. 591, note 53).



We must now ask the logical question why the diplomatic message of 1477 mentions Chersonesus and not Mangup (Theodoro). This answer is more complicated because—in my opinion—it concerns another dimension of Stephen's thinking.

At this point, I believe that the explanation of the facts can only begin with an already mentioned situation, i.e. the reconstruction of the church in Partenit, in 1427, by Damian, “Metropolitan of Theodoro and All Gothia”. The specification of this title is—as I've shown—very important, but the troubling fact in this case is that the church rebuilt by Metropolitan Damian was erected in the 8th century by Bishop John of Gothia (John the Confessor, later sanctified, 26 June), who was born in the very same city. Or, this bishop—who also led a rebellion against the Khazars (around 787)—had his see in Doros, the centre (“capital”) of Gothia, which later became Mangup. Therefore, in 1427 Metropolitan Damian rightfully called his distant predecessor “our holy father and Archbishop of the city of Theodoro and All Gothia, John the Confessor”.<sup>57</sup> Damian's votive inscription rewrites, in several rows, centuries of Theodorian (or Mangupian) history and, simultaneously, proclaims *the legitimacy of the rule of the princes of Theodoro over Gothia*, by referring to a period when even the name of the Genoese was unknown. From this point of view, the votive inscription of Metropolitan Damian is a genuine *manifestation of power*, certainly known to Alexius. It shows that, by occupying Gothia in 1422, *Alexius did nothing more than to recuperate a territory that had belonged to his predecessors ever since the first millennium—a genuine restoration of their patrimony*.

The history of the Crimean bishoprics is not very well known. During the 11th–12th centuries, there were five archdioceses: Gothia (with the see at Doros), Chersonesus, Bosporus, Sugdaia and Phullae (the last two were reunited under the name of Sugdaphullae).<sup>58</sup> During the 14th century, the documents mention the metropolises of Gothia, Sugdaia and Chersonesus, that sometimes disputed the jurisdiction over some settlements.<sup>59</sup> After the end of this century, the metropolis of Chersonesus disappears, apparently, from the written sources.<sup>60</sup>

57 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, 93 and 278. For the events from the 8–9 centuries, see also Marie-France Auzépy, “Gothie et Crimée de 750 à 830 dans les sources ecclésiastiques et monastiques grecques,” in Auzépy, *L'histoire des iconoclastes*, (Paris: Association des Amis du CHCB, 2007), pp. 199–208.

58 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, pp. 145–146.

59 Ibid. pp. 276–277.

60 See also *Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanae*, IV (*Scriptores et acta Imperii byzantini saeculorum IV–XV*), eds. Haralambie Mihăescu, Radu Lăzărescu, Nicolae Șerban Tanașoca, Tudor Teoteoi, (Bucharest: Academiei, 1982), pp. 221, 223, 237, 239, 241, 253, 269—mentions of the metropolitans of Chersonesus between 1382 and 1401. In 1401 there is mentioned the election of the monk Makarios as metropolitan of Chersonesus (Ibid. p. 277).

This can be easily explained due to the destruction of Chersonesus by Timur Lenk,<sup>61</sup> during a devastating campaign that affected Mangup as well;<sup>62</sup> the city's sufferings became the subject of a poem, that became in turn a first-hand historical source for the history of the place.<sup>63</sup> It would seem, according to the succession of the information, that the diocese of Chersonesus was included, in a way, into that of Gothia.<sup>64</sup> The city itself was destroyed: "From Byzantium's main Northern outpost, Chersonesus became a small fishing village"<sup>65</sup> where, however, towards the middle of the 15th century, the princes of Theodoro still erected an adorned structure, as we've shown, carrying their monograms. We must remark that no bishop from the Crimea was called in 1438 to take part at the Council of Ferrara<sup>66</sup> (that was concluded in Florence the following year): a testimony of the fading importance of those sees or of the clear antiunionism of their bishops?

But the importance of this place was of a whole other nature. Two monasteries in the area preserved the memory of two important saints, two popes of Rome from before the Schism—Pope Clement I, the third successor of Saint Peter the Apostle, persecuted by Emperor Trajan and killed here, and Pope Martin I (649–655), an adversary of Monothelitism, exiled at Chersonesus, who died here and was buried in the church of Saint Mary Vlaherniotissa.<sup>67</sup> A large number of monasteries, many of them built in caves (whose traces are still visible today), formed here "a monastic centre similar to Athos or the Meteora."<sup>68</sup> Chersonesus was "a promoter of Christianity, a permanent support for the missionaries, a small pilgrimage centre", a "missionary city";<sup>69</sup> the churches and monasteries in the caves are a proof of its attachment to the Hesychast teachings.<sup>70</sup> Given all these, the region could present a particular attraction for a prince like Stephen, thus justifying the mentioning of Chersonesus instead of Mangup. Given our actual level of information, I see no other reason why Stephen the Great would have manifested such an interest for Chersonesus so

61 Yashaeva, "Chersonul", p. 136.

62 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, pp. 188–192.

63 Silvio Giuseppe Mercati, "Δύηγησις τῆς πόλεως Θεοδώρου. Versi di Matteo Ieromonaco", *Studi Bizantini*, 11, (Roma, 1927), pp. 21–30. The place called Theodoros was identified by N. Iorga, in the same year, as being Theodoro-Mangup cf. Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 188.

64 At the beginning of the 15th century, the metropolitan of Gothia was also *locum tenens* for Ephesus—cf. *Fontes*, IV, 261–263, 269, 277.

65 Yashaeva, "Chersonul", pp. 136–137.

66 For their list, see *Fontes*, IV, p. 373 (Sylvestros Syropoulos).

67 Tatiana Yashaeva, "Chersonul", 135.

68 *Ibid.* pp. 137–138.

69 *Ibid.* pp. 133–134.

70 *Ibid.* p. 135.

that he would mention it in the message sent to Venice (and probably to Pope Sixtus) in the spring of 1477.

But even if this is a valid explanation, it does open a new chapter in the story of Stephen the Great. The liberation and inclusion of Gothia among his domains would have brought Moldavia two ancient metropolitan sees (Gothia and Chersonesus), with a considerable rank—implying a status modification for the Metropolis of Suceava and all Moldo-Wallachia—as well as its own Athos.

Such an understanding of things can also better explain Stephen's endeavour to keep the principality of Theodoro in his system of alliances. This endeavour was not limited to the royal marriages and diplomatic messages, but reached the level of—in the language of that age—meddling in its internal affairs, by sending an army corps<sup>71</sup> that imposed the necessary man on Mangup's throne: Alexander, called by the Tartar Bey Eminek, in a letter sent to the Sultan in May 1476, "Alexius the Syrian".<sup>72</sup> Without any doubt, sending such an army also implied a considerable financial effort and an assumed risk (which, unfortunately, came true). We cannot know how many men-at-arms the prince of Theodoro had at his disposal, but the soldiers sent by the Moldavian lord were clearly superior: not only were they already experienced in fighting the Turks, but—as someone recently pointed out—they were trained in using artillery.<sup>73</sup> The military expedition in Crimea can be considered—as I believe—*the highpoint of the offensive anti-Ottoman policy* of Stephen the Great.<sup>74</sup> This also given the exact measure of what the loss of Mangup meant for the projects of the Moldavian voivode, after a siege that lasted for almost six months; equally, it gives the exact measure of the efforts to save this "Christian realm",

71 The number of Moldavian soldiers—300—is the same as in the account of a witness of the events of 1475: "uno castello fortissimo della Gotia dove si trova il Signior de la Gotia con 3 cento Vallachi et li dato cinque battaglie ..." (cf. Sergiu Iosipescu, "Ștefan cel Mare coordonate de strategie pontică", *Revista de Istorie*, 35 (1982), p. 651).

72 *Le khanat de Crimée dans les archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapı*, présenté par Alexandre Benningsen, Pertev Naili Boratav, Dilek Desai, Chantal Lemerrier-Quellejay, (Paris: EHESS, 1978), p. 62. *If this information can be referred to the same character*, then this is the only contemporary source that indirectly attests the success of the operation started at the beginning of summer, as well as the fact that the prince imposed by Stephen remained on the throne until the end. The surname of "the Syrian" is, indeed, curious, and so far, unexplainable cf. Anca Popescu, "Mitropolia Goției într-o diplomă otomană de investire a Patriarhului de Constantinopol", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 18 (2000), p. 171, note 26.

73 Cf. Alexander Gertsen and Nadezhda Gertsen, "Moldova", p. 153.

74 See also Sergiu Iosipescu, "Ștefan cel Mare", p. 648: "Between Stephen the Great's political and military projects and achievements in the Black Sea, the most spectacular was, without a doubt, his intervention in the Crimea in 1475".

either through one of the dynasty members taken into captivity to Istanbul, whom he tried to liberate in the spring of 1476,<sup>75</sup> wither through Lady Mary Asanina Paleologhina, when it was clear that all the male dynasty members had perished or were forcefully converted to Islam.

## 1 Excursus

It is, perhaps, the best time for an excursus on some facts before the reign of Stephen the Great, that might help us understand Moldavia's relationship with the principality of Theodoro, at least regarding the 1472 dynastic marriage.

The circumstances of the Venetian-Genoese war and of the complementary conflict, between Alexius and Caffa (prolonged until the autumn of 1441<sup>76</sup>), bring Moldavia into discussion, under the light of two rather curious documents, whose information are not very precise, nor very clear. The first one, of April 1435, shows, on the one hand, that Venice—to whom Alexius of Theodoro had offered his services<sup>77</sup>—had its attention set on Cetatea Albă, due to the offer made by the ruler of this city (“dominus Maurocastri”); on the other hand, it mentions that, in the previous years, the father of the aforementioned prince, a *monk*, had travelled precisely with this purpose to Constantinople, where he had secretly met the bailo of that time, Marino Zane.<sup>78</sup> The secret meeting from the capital of the Byzantine Empire was placed between 1432 and 1434, when the bailo with this name was overseeing the Venetian affairs there.<sup>79</sup> This timespan is too close to the time when Alexius allied himself with the Venetians against the Genoese for the two actions not to be connected.

It may be assumed that “the lord of Gothia” and “the lord of Moncastro” had, understandably, not only commercial relations, a fact quite clearly suggested by the second document. This document—published in 1929 by Virginia Vasiliu<sup>80</sup> and thoroughly commented on by A.A. Vasiliev in 1936<sup>81</sup>—was a letter sent by the Venetian bailo in Constantinople to Alexius of Theodoro.

75 Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, III, p. 55.

76 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 210 and note 4.

77 A document of June 1432 makes a clear mention of this proposal of (military, of course) collaboration, without any other detail: “pro executione rerum quas dominus Alexius, dominus Gothie, intendit facere nostro dominio”.

78 Iorga, *Studii asupra Evului mediu românesc*, pp. 226–227.

79 Cf. Andrei Pippidi, “Din nou despre inscripțiile de la Cetatea Albă”, *In honorem Paul Cernovodeanu*, ed. Violeta Barbu, (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1998), p. 79.

80 Vasiliu, “Teodoro”, pp. 335–336.

81 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, pp. 210–212.

Unfortunately, the document is undated, and doesn't present the name of the bailo, nor very clear formulas. One can see, from this letter, that the bailo was close to the Crimean prince and he corresponded with him *via Cetatea Albă*: he took interest in the epidemic that had affected the cattle herds, as well as in the prince's health and he promised to send him the poisoned sweets (!) he had demanded.<sup>82</sup> There were several divergent datations proposed for the letter. The first one suggested a moment between 1442–1443, while another one considered that it was written *after* 1441; finally A.A. Vasiliev to propose its dating *post* March 1436,<sup>83</sup> considering that this exchange of letters was only possible after the sending of a Venetian representative in Cetatea Albă<sup>84</sup> (Francesco Duodo, appointed Vice-consul in March 1436).<sup>85</sup>

We must observe, however, that the “lord” from Cetatea Albă had sent ever since 1432–1433 his offer of collaboration to the Venetians, and therefore it wasn't necessary to wait for the appointment of a Vice-consul in order to send *at least* the correspondence of the prince of Mangup to and from Venice through Cetatea Albă. Therefore, I do believe that these two documents are chronologically and causally in a far closer relationship than one could have imagined.

Corroborating this information with that from a very well-known votive inscription from Cetatea Albă, in which a certain *Teodorca* noted the completion of certain works (probably a general restoration), is tempting. This inscription, whose text was written in Greek, was dated 10 November 6948; the *Anno Mundi* was usually considered to be 1440 AD, in accordance with the custom of the princely chancellery to start the year on 1 January. We can, however, ask if this rule of a princely chancellery using the Slavic language was also followed by the Greek chancellery of the lord from Cetatea Albă: the Greek form would rather suggest the use of the Byzantine year, starting on 1 September. In this case, *Teodorca*'s votive inscription dates back to the year 1439, being close to the events between 1432 and 1435. And then, it is possible for *Teodorca* to be the “dominus Maurocastrī” of 1435, since he is called “magister of the principality

82 G.I. Brătianu considered this passage concerning these sweets to be “quite obscure” (Brătianu, *Marea Neagră*, p. 414). See also the commentary of the same historian, in *Chestiunea Mării Negre* (Ibid. pp. 436–437, note 14).

83 G.I. Brătianu placed it “between 1436 and 1441” (Ibid. p. 414).

84 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, pp. 211–212.

85 Iorga, *Studii asupra Evului mediu românesc*, 227. About “l'ouverture moldave de 1435–1439” (“the Moldavian opening of 1435–1439”), see also Adrian Niculescu, “Vénitiens et Génois acteurs de la colonization dans les Pays Roumains et aux bouches du Danube aux XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in *Le partage du monde. Echanges et colonisations dans la Méditerranée médiévales*, eds. Michel Balard, Alain Ducellier (Paris: Sorbonne, 1998), pp. 252–255.

and overseer of the city” by the inscription of 1440 or 1439. Or, this character—about whom some very interesting things were revealed recently—will maintain, during the following years, close relations with the princes of Theodoro: there is mention of his businesses with Olobei,<sup>86</sup> in 1455, and in 1461 he granted a significant loan to the lord of Mangup.<sup>87</sup>

A few years later, the sources present another character who might as well be identified with the “dominus Maurocastri”. On 6 March 1443, the first burgrave of Cetatea Albă, namely *Iurghici*,<sup>88</sup> was attested—a character that left clear traces in the toponymy of the area.<sup>89</sup> Very recent researches and interpretations tend to identify him as the main actor of several businesses that took place during these years.

Between 1437 and 1438, a certain *kir Jorgi* does business with the Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer, being presented in his register as the son of a

86 Vasiliev, *The Goths*, p. 232, note 2.

87 Ștefan Andreescu quoting contributions of Professor Michel Balard, according to whom Teodorca “a prété en 1461 plus de 40,000 aspres au seigneur de Théodoro-Mangoup” (“lent in 1461 more than 40,000 aspers to the lord of Theodoro-Mangup”). Subsequently, Ștefan Andreescu has published the complete version of the document dated March 13, 1461, which shows that the loan was anterior to this date (“superiore tempore”) and of 553 Venetian ducats (Ștefan Andreescu, “Date noi despre Teodorca de Telica”, in *Prinos lui Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani*, eds. Ionel Căndeia, Marian Sârbu și Marian Neagu, (Brăila: Istros, 2004), 628–631). The strange part in this document is the name of the ruler of Theodoro: “magnificus Cheyhibi, dominus Theodori”. The author proposes the identification not with “a member of the ruling family of Mangup”, but with “a Tatar prince, perhaps a leader of the Shirin ‘clan’, the same that, in 1460, under the name of *Cheyhibi*, was the uncontested ruler of all Gothia”. This last specification completely disagrees with what we know from other sources and we must assume that a dramatic turnaround in the principality of Theodoro, in the late 50’s, in order to presume the existence of Tatar princes in Mangup and other cities of Gothia. This can be a sobriquet, a title or a misspelled name (as in the case of “Affendizi”, in 1381, or, respectively, of Olobei himself). This question should be further inquired by scholars.

88 *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A, I (1384–1448), volume edited by C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu and L. Șimanschi, (Bucharest: Academiei, 1975), p. 316, no. 225.

89 An Ottoman document mentions “Iurgheci-Kerman, a fortress near Akkerman” see Mustafa A. Mehmed, *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, (Bucharest, 1976), 10, no. 9 (see also 11, footnote 5). In the quoted edition, the document is attributed to the reign of Stephen IV of Moldavia (1517–1527); subsequently, it was presented as far more likely for “Istefan” to be Stephen the Great; in this case, the document can be dated after the conclusion of peace with the Porte, after the conquest of Kilia and Cetatea Albă, i.e. around 1486 cf. Tahsin Gemil, “Observații referitoare la încheierea păcii și stabilirea hotărului dintre Moldova și Imperiul Otoman”, *Revista Arhivelor*, 60 (1983), pp. 124–128 (with a new translation of the document). See also Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 244, note 749.

certain Fotios, classified—however—as a Romanian (Wallachian).<sup>90</sup> In 1453, a certain *Georgici jupanus Vlacus* is mentioned in Constantinople,<sup>91</sup> and between 1468 and 1472, *Georgius* or *Jurg*, called *Vollata* or *Walata* was a leading citizen of Cetatea Albă, while his son Demetrius was trading with Lviv.<sup>92</sup> According to Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, this is a single character, none other than *pan Iurghici*, burgrave of Cetatea Albă between 1443 and 1447.<sup>93</sup>

If the truth of this assumption—in fact, of this series of assumptions—would be somehow demonstrated,<sup>94</sup> then Iurghici (Jorgi, Iurgii) could be placed in the dignity of “jupan”<sup>95</sup> of Cetatea Albă between 1432–1434, before

90 Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, “Moldavian Merchants and Commerce in Constantinople in the 15th Century in the Book of Accounts of Giacomo Badoer,” *Etudes byzantines et post-byzantines*, II (1991), pp. 166–168.

91 Ibid. p. 169.

92 Ibid. p. 170. Cf. Iorga, *Studii și documente*, XXIII, 305–306.

93 Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, “Moldavian Merchants”, p. 170. The connection between the two characters was also observed by N. Iorga (Iorga, *Studii asupra Evulului mediu românesc*, p. 225).

94 It must be observed that all the documents mention him as burgrave of Cetatea Albă between 1443 and 1447. Iurghici is joined by his son-in-law, pan Oancea the Logothete; the latter was grand logothete at the court in Vaslui of Stephen II between 1436 and 1437, while the grand logothete in Suceava at that time was pan Dienis (Dinisco), who signed the documents since 1431 (if not even since 1423, when there is mention of an “Onța gramatic”) and will remain in the advisory body of boyars until 1447, when he lost his life for supporting Alexander II, on 12 October 1449 cf. Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova. Sec. XIV–XVII*, (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 1971), p. 282. Iurghici is mentioned as burgrave of Cetatea Albă for the last time on 14 January, 1447; a month later, on 11 February, only logothete Oancea was still member of the council. In these conditions, there is a possibility that Iurghici would have ended his activity and life in January–February 1447. Thus, the identification of Iurghici with the “businessman” of 1468–1472 seems less plausible—even more with the “jupan” of 1453. However, it is not entirely impossible for a man whose father (the monk sent to Constantinople) was still alive and was in his prime around 1432–1434 to have as son-in-law someone who after just two years was grand logothete and subsequently died on the battlefield.

95 The name of “jupan” for a leader from Cetatea Albă appears in foreign sources in a time when the title of *burgrave* was already common in the internal documents: in 1455, related to the occupation of the city of Lerici, there is mention of “the leaders of this place [Cetatea Albă], who are called jupani, and the seniors”—*rectores loci illius, quos jupanos vocant, et seniores*. Genoa shall complain, for this abuse, “to the lord jupan and the seniors of Cetatea Albă”—*dominus jupano et senioribus Albicastro* (Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, III, pp. 32 and 34). Logic compels us to accept that the “jupanus et seniores Albicastro” of 1455 refer to the same reality as the “dominus sive communitas Mocastrî” of 1458 and 1472. Also, in 1468, in the accident whose victim was Gregorio de Reza, there is mention of *lo jupano di Maocastro* and, in relation to Voivode Stephen, of *li soi rectori di Maurocastro* (Iorga, *Acte și fragmente*, III, 43 and 44). According to I. Bogdan, “Inscripțiile de la Cetatea Albă și stăpânirea Moldovei asupra ei”, *Academia Română. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, s. II,

being appointed as burgrave,<sup>96</sup> i.e. princely dignitary;<sup>97</sup> in such a case, his father, Photios, can very well be the monk who travelled to Constantinople in order to meet the Venetian bailo Marino Zane.

But no matter the identity of the “jupan” of 1432–1434<sup>98</sup> and of his father, the monk,<sup>99</sup> it is obvious that the actions during those years were in accord

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- 30 (1907–1908), pp. 348–350 the *rectores* and *jupani* of 1455 and 1468 are nothing else but what one would call the municipal administration, with the “judge” and members of the city council (“pârgarii”). A more detailed debate on the questions would be very useful. See also Șerban Papacostea, “Moncastru și Cetatea Albă identitatea unei așezări medievale”, *Revista Istorică*, 6 (1995), pp. 91–95 (Maurocastrum/Moncastru would be the name of the fortress, while Albicastrum—that of the city).
- 96 It is obvious that Iurghici could also call himself, as Teodorca, “magister of the principality and overseer of the city”—*μαγίστρος τῆς ἀφεντίας καὶ τοῦ κάστρου ἐπιστάτης*. As Andrei Pippidi remarked, the use of these archaic Byzantine titles indicates “a relation with the Empire of which their bearers, both the prince and his representative in Cetatea Albă, were proud” (Pippidi, “Inscriptiile”, p. 82).
- 97 See, in this sense, the remark of Nicolae Bănescu, “Maurocastrum-Moncastru-Cetatea Albă”, *Academia Română. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, s. III, 22 (1939), 12/176: “He [the burgrave mentioned in 1443] couldn’t be appointed at that very moment, we must assume he was there for a while”. The identification of this character with Mihul (Michael) the secretary and later grand logothete, son of archpriest Iuga, is no longer an option.
- 98 “Personnage non identifiable à l’état actuel de nos connaissances” (Non-identifiable character with our existing knowledges)—this formula (Papacostea, *Venise*, p. 601) is the most suitable in defining this question. However, is this “dominus” a commander of the fortress or a ruler of the city? Cf. Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din sec. al X-lea până la mijlocul sec. al XVI-lea*, (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 1997), p. 213.
- 99 Without trying to compose an inventory of the proposed identifications for this “caloierus”, the father of the ruler of Cetatea Albă (“pater illius qui dominatur Maurocastru”), I don’t think we can overlook—precisely in these notes concerning the principality of Theodoro—one of the strangest and, probably, most fantastic identification. “The monk” would have been a prince of Soldaia, Mangup and Cembalo (?), Stephen Vasilievici, who departed for Moscow at the end of the 14th century or the beginning of the 15th century, where he became a monk under the name of Simon, returning to his son, the prince of Maurocastru in the Crimea, three decades later—Jacob Bromberg, “Du nouveau sur les princes Theodoro-Mangoup en Gothie criméenne”, *Byzantina Metabyzantina*, 1 (1946), pp. 65–74 (see especially 73). Most likely this was the article referred to by N. Bănescu in his lecture given at the Romanian Academy on 13 October 1939 (Bănescu, “Maurocastrum”), making use of a copy sent by Fr Dölger (*Ibidem*, 3/167 and 5/169, footnote 3). G.I. Brătianu received the study in the same manner—see *Recherches sur Vicina et Cetatea Albă*, (Bucharest, 1935), p. 160. After it was published, in 1946, J. Bromberg’s study was quickly forgotten. A very recent proposal of identification is that of Matei Cazacu, for whom the “lord” of Maurocastrum was a boyar mentioned in the Moldavian documents between 1436 and 1447, called Manoil the Greek (“Grecul”); since this boyar was also called “Protopovici” (son of the archpriest), Matei Cazacu considers that he was the son of archpriest Constantine, who took part in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439);



with the attitude of Prince Alexius of Theodoro, and this was nothing else but (the expression) of a closer relationship. Besides, it's impossible not to imagine a relationship between Theodoro and Cetatea Albă. Unfortunately, we know too little about the relations—inspired by their joined interests—between the several Black Sea powers. The history of the passions of the Trebizond-born merchant John, in a city from the Crimea,<sup>100</sup> ruled by the Tatars and the subsequent bringing of his relics in *Moldavia*<sup>101</sup> is, most likely, *the most complete expression of these relationships that we have nowadays*, although their starting point can be certainly dated before the 15th century.<sup>102</sup> Just as the Genoese envoys to the Moldavian court of Peter I, who came through Cetatea Albă in 1386,<sup>103</sup> were not, most likely, the first contact between Genoa and Moldavia

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consequently, this archpriest Constantine would be that “caloierus” sent with a secret mission to Constantinople in 1432–1434 (cf. Matei Cazacu, “I rapporti tra la Repubblica di Venezia e Moldova all’inizio del Quattrocento”, *Dall Adriatico al Mar Nero: Veneziani e Romeni tracciati di storie comuni*, ed. Grigore Arbore Popescu (Rome, 2003), pp. 152–153; Cazacu, “Venise et la Moldavie au début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 21 (2003), pp. 136–138). No matter how tempting this proposal might be, it's still conditioned (and undermined) by other hypothetical identifications; but the argument that completely contradicts it is, I believe, the naming of the father as *caloierus*—“illius qui dominatur Moncastro”. In order to avoid this contradiction, Matei Cazacu adds another hypothesis, i.e. that the name of *caloierus* “recouvre celle de protopope (protopapas, en grec), mais aussi de topotiritis (vicaire) de la Moldovalachie” [replaces that of archpriest (protopapas in Greek), but also that of topotiritis (vicar) of Moldo-Wallachia] (*Venise et la Moldavie*, p. 136). But no matter what administrative realities it would have covered, *caloierus* designates a status beyond all doubt: the bailo Marino Zane, who spent long hours talking with him, couldn't have been wrong in this aspect.

100 Cf. Petre Ș. Năsturel, “Une prétendue oeuvre de Grégoire Tsamblak: *Le Martyre de Saint Jean le Nouveau*,” *Actes du Ier Congrès International des Etudes Balkaniques et Sud-Est Européennes*, (Sofia, 1971), 345–351 and the debates concerning this lecture, pp. 353–358.

101 Cf. Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Mucenicia Sfântului Ioan cel Nou. Noi puncte de vedere,” *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 de ani*, eds. I. Căndeia, P. Cernovodeanu and Gh. Lazăr, (Brăila: Istros, 2003), pp. 555–572. I shall return with new specifications, that will make light—permanently, perhaps—in the last controversial aspects of this captivating dilemma.

102 Cf. *Theodoro Spandugnino, Patritio Constantinopolitano, De la origine deli Imperatori Ottomani, ordini dela corte, forma del guerreggiare loro, religione, rito e costume dela natione*, edited by. C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au Moyen Âge*, IX, Paris, 1890, pp. 146–147. This information should be a subject for reflection and research (see also Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Mucenicia”, p. 572; Gorovei, “Maria Asanina Paleologhina”, pp. 44–45 and note 195).

103 Papacostea, *Geneza statului în evul mediu românesc*, p. 106; see also pp. 119–120. The message of 1386 was entrusted to the Genoese nobles Carolus of Orto and Illario of Doria. A few years later, in 1392, a certain Illario Doria—*Illarius de Auria*—married the bastard daughter (Isabella) of emperor Manuel II (Averkios Th. Papadopoulos, *Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen 1259–1453*, (Munich, 1938), 70, no. 104); is this the same

concerning the situation of the Genoese colonies in the Crimea, so too the matrimonial alliance established in 1472 couldn't have been the first (accidental) contact between the principality that ruled the *Parathalassia* at the Mouth of the Dniester and the one that controlled another *Parathalassia*, on the Southern shore of the Crimean Peninsula.

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person?! The war with the Tatars, that was the cause for these envoys to Moldavia, concerned precisely Gothia, occupied by Genoa in 1381! It is suggestive that the first mention of a "dominus de lo Teodoro" dates from the very same year see Gabriella Airaldi, *Studi e documenti su Genova e l'Oltremare*, (Genoa, 1974), p. 103.

# Attempts at Forging a Genoese-Polish-Tatar Alliance against the Ottoman Empire in 1480–1484

Danuta Quirini-Poplawska

On 6 June 1475, after an almost week-long onslaught, Sultan Mehemmed II forced Caffa, a Genoese colony in the Crimea, to surrender. Soon afterwards, other Genoese enclaves in the region, notably Soldaia and La Copa, and also the Venetian colony of Tana, capitulated and fell into Turkish hands. This is how, after the capture of Sinope in 1461, the empires of Trebizond, Simisso and Samastria in the Black Sea basin were taken over by the Ottomans. The fall of Caffa, an important trade centre, was a severe economic blow to the Genoese Republic, yet it also had a negative impact on the previously blossoming Eastern trade, on the southern marches of Poland and Lithuania. Highly prosperous trade links were destroyed, and the transit route supplying Poland with goods from the East and connecting Poland with the Crimea was gone. It had been a source of prosperity for many Polish cities, principally Lviv, where economic life now visibly waned.<sup>1</sup>

It was not easy for the Genoese Republic to accept the reality of the loss of blossoming trade outposts in the East. Poland too must have remembered the promise of 1 July 1462, given by King Casimir IV Jagiello (Kazimierz Jagiellończyk), who had agreed to accept Genoese colonies among its vassals, and embraced them as a Polish protectorate.<sup>2</sup> An additional negative

- 1 Guido Astuti, "Le colonie genovesi del Mar Nero e i loro ordinamenti giuridici," *Studi in memoria di Federico Melis*, I, (Napoli: Giannini, 1978), p. 330; Nicolae Iorga (ed.), *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, II, (Paris, 1899), pp. 158–163; Joannis Długossii senioris canonici Cracoviensis, *Historiae Polonicae libri XII*, V, ed. Ignatius Żegota, *Opera omnia*, XI, (Cracoviae, 1873), p. 639. J. Długosz does not mention the role of Caffa for Poland, seeing only God's punishment in the fall of the city for the mistakes of its inhabitants; Amadeo Vigna (ed.), "Codice diplomatico delle colonie tauro-liguri durante la Signoria dell'Ufficio di S. Giorgio", II /2, "Relazione della caduta di Caffa scritta da un anonimo toscano", *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/1, (Genova, 1871), 242–243. The following holdings were used: CD; Agostino Giustiniani, *Annale della Repubblica di Genova*, II, (Genova, 1854), pp. 479–480; Michele Giuseppe Canale, *Della Crimea, del suo commercio e dei suoi dominatori*, III, (Genova, 1856), pp. 348–349; Leszek Podhorecki, *Dzieje Lwowa*, (Warszawa: Volumen, 1993), p. 46.
- 2 Theodor Wierzbowski, (ed.) *Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria*, I 1447–1492, (Varsaviae, 1905), no. 609 (the following holdings were used: MRPS); CD, II /2, "Supplemento al codice diplomatico delle colonie tauro-liguri durante la Signoria di San Giorgio (1453–1475)", *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/2, (1879) no. 14–16, pp. 470–471; "Listy Genuieńczyków

consequence of the Crimea being captured by the Turks was a change in the position of the Perekop Horde of Mengli Girey—a vassal of the Ottoman Porte—towards the Jagiellonian court; now it turned from an ally into a hostile tool in the hands of Turkey and Muscovy.<sup>3</sup>

The capture of the Black Sea basin by the Turks and the fall of the last Christian harbours in the region also affected and irritated the Apostolic See. However, the political situation in Europe was not favourable. It was only the Republic of Venice, since 1463, defending its Adriatic holdings that single-handedly opposed the advancing Turkish onslaught. Venetian diplomacy tried to use the Tatars against the Ottomans, extending to them a proposal of cooperation as early as 1476. Perhaps the Tatar legation that arrived in Venice in May of the same year conducted negotiations on the matter. Simultaneously, Filippo Buonaccorsi, known as Callimachus, was sent to Italy as a Polish legate, and he discussed the same question in Venice. The capture of Caffa by the Turks resulted in a direct threat to the southern borders of Poland, which made the Polish court seek an alliance with Venice and the Apostolic See. There was no alliance with Venice, however, as it saw its partner in Matthias Corvinus, and Poland proposed a Venetian-Habsburg alliance.<sup>4</sup> Nor did Stephen the Great of Moldavia accept the fall of Caffa, as he tried to make relevant arrangements regarding this matter with the Republic of Venice in the Spring of 1477. Foreseeing a confrontation, he even made preliminary military and financial

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z Kaffy do Kazimierza Jagiellończyka”, *Pamiętnik Historyczny*, ed. Leopold Hubert, 1, (Warszawa, 1861), pp. 9–11; Marian Dubiecki, “Kaffa, osada genueńska i jej stosunek do Polski w XV w.”, *Obrazy i studia historyczne*, seria II, (Warszawa, 1899), pp. 21–22; Marian Małowist, *Kaffa- kolonia genueńska na Krymie i problem wschodni w latach 1453–1475*, (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii, 1947), pp. 174–177.

- 3 Feliks Koneczny, “Sprawy z Mengli-Girejem 1473–1501,” *Ateneum Wileńskie*, 4 (1927), pp. 141–143, 154–155; Koneczny, “Litwa i Moskwa w latach 1449–1492,” *Dzieje Rosji*, II, (Wilno, 1929), 167.
- 4 Arduino Cremonesi, *La sfida turca contro gli Asburgo e Venezia*, (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1976), p. 71; Emilio Motta, “Un ambasciatore tartaro a Venezia nel 1476,” *Archivio Veneto*, 37 (1889) pp. 147, 151; Angela Maria Caracciolo-Aricò (ed.), Marino Sanudo, *Le vite dei dogi (1474–1494)*, (Padova, 1989), pp. 75, 80; Józef Garbacik, “Kallimach jako dyplomata i polityk”, *Rozprawy PAU, Wydział Filozoficzno-Historyczny*, Seria 2, 46, (Kraków, 1948), pp. 50, 53, 58, 83; Bolesław Stachoń, “Polska wobec weneckich projektów użycia Persów i Tatarów przeciw Turcji w II połowie XV wieku”, *Prace historyczne wydane ku uczczeniu 50-lecia Akademickiego Koła Historyków Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie 1878–1928*, (Lwów, 1929), p. 171; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, (the following holdings were used: ASV), *Senato Secreti*, reg. 27, 119r–121 r; reg. 28, 24 v; Enrico Cornet (ed.) *Le guerre dei Veneti nell’Asia 1470–1474. Documenti cavati dall’Archivio ai Frari in Venezia*, (Vienna, 1856), pp. 98–115, no. 77–93; Władysław Semkowicz, “Gasztold Marcin”, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, 7, (Kraków, 1948), p. 299.

preparations. Considering them not in its interests, Venice declined to take part in negotiations on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

There was no consensus among the Italian states either, and the rupture between Venice, Florence, and Milan was aggravated even further. The news of repressions against the participants of the Pazzi Plot (1478) saw the Pope condemn the actions of the Medici family. With Naples siding with the Pope, Venice, Florence, and Milan entered an offensive-defensive alliance. There was no talk of fighting the Turks together. Soon, Venice waged war on Ferrara, which again divided Italy into two new camps, causing a several-years-long war on the Apennine Peninsula. At the same time, Mehmed II, eager to draw Florence to his side, had Bernardo Bandini, the murderer of Giuliano de Medici who had found refuge in Turkey, arrested and sent to Italy.<sup>6</sup>

All the international talks conducted by Pope Sixtus IV and the attempts at forging anti-Turkish alliances did not result in a combined struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Mehmed II was victorious, conducting surprise attacks in different parts of the Mediterranean. After capturing and looting Kruje, the mountainous capital of Albania, on 16 June 1478 the Turks attacked the northern reaches of Italy for the third time, and crossed the Tagliamento River, destroying among others the cities of Sacile, Conegliano, and Pordenone.<sup>7</sup>

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- 5 Șerban Papacostea, "Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare și Genovezii din Marea Neagră", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol*, 29 (1992), p. 73; I. Bogdan (ed.), *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, II, (Bucharest, 1903) p. 346; Eugen Denize, *Țările Române și Veneția. Relații politice (1441–1541): de la Iancu de Hunedoara la Petru Rareș*, (Bucharest: Albatros, 1995), pp. 118–119; Adrian Niculescu, "La diplomazia veneziana e il principe Stefan cel Mare di Moldavia (1457–1504) durante la guerra contro i Turchi del 1463–1477," in *Italia e Romania. Due popoli e due storie a confronto (secc. XIV–XVIII)*, ed. Sante Graciotti, (Firenze, 1997), pp. 25, 134–135; Mustafa A. Mehmet, "La politique ottomane a l'égard de la Moldavie et du Khanat de Crimée vers la fin du règne du Sultan Mehmed II Le Conquérant", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 13, (1974), p. 1.
- 6 Eugenio Musatti, *Storia di Venezia*, I, (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1936) pp. 344–345; Franz Babinger, "Lorenzo di Medici e la Corte Ottomana", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 121, (1963), pp. 316–317; Riccardo Predelli (ed.), *I libri commemorativi della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti*, V 1448–1488, (Venezia, 1901), libro 16, no. 97; Heinrich Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, II, (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1920), p. 381; Edoardo Piva, "Origine e conclusione della pace e dell'alleanza fra i Veneziani e Sisto IV (1479–1480)", *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, N.S., A. 1, II /1, (1901), p. 36 and passim; Franco Cardini, *Gerusalemme d'oro, di rame, di luce pellegrini, crociati, sognatori d'Oriente fra XI e XV secolo*, (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1991), p. 223.
- 7 Cremonesi, *La sfida turca*, pp. 132–134; Francesco Longo and Agostino Segredo (eds.), "Domenico Malipiero, Annali veneti dall' anno 1457 al 1500", parte prima, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, VII/1, (1843) pp. 114, 116–118 (henceforth Malipiero); Paolo Preto, *Venezia e Turchi*, (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, 1975), pp. 32–33; Nicolae Iorga, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, II, (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1909), 185; Caracciolo-Aricò (ed.), Marino Sanudo, *Le vite dei dogi (1474–1494)*, I, 122, 123; Ludvig von. Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, (Roma, 1925),

They simultaneously attacked the Venetian dominions in Albania, capturing among others Scutari (Skodra), Drivasto (Drisht), and Alessio (Lezhe). The Serenissima was fighting on her last reserves of strength, and, eventually overpowered by the Turks, had to accept the conditions they dictated as well as the humiliating peace treaty of 1479.<sup>8</sup>

In May 1480, the Turks attacked the Isle of Rhodes once again, and in Summer they conquered the Ionian islands of Cephalonia and Zakynthos. Having been under attack since April 1480 and subsequently kept under siege, Rhodes managed to repulse the onslaught, despite major damage and loss of life. On 30 September, the Turks had to withdraw their armies and they abandoned the concept further attacks on the island. Parallel to this, a strong Turkish contingent attacked Apulia from its positions in Albania on 28 July. In September, it was joined by the Turkish troops released from the siege of Rhodes. The Turks quickly captured and destroyed Brindisi, Nardo and Lecce, and attacked Otranto. After a desperate defence, the city fell into Turkish hands on 11 August 1480.<sup>9</sup> Italy was shaken by the unexpected blow, allegations and accusations multiplied, and voices calling for revenge and retaliation became ubiquitous. The alarm and horror that gripped the Italian states found an expression in a poetic work by Vespasiano Bisticci entitled *Lamento*

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p. 530; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, II, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1978), pp. 326, 338–339.

- 8 Cremonesi, *La sfida turca*, pp. 136, 137; *I libri commemoriali*, v, libro 16, no. 126; Caracciolo Aricò (ed.), Malipiero, “Annali veneti”, parte prima, pp. 118, 120–121; Kretschmayr, *Geschichte von Venedig*, II, pp. 381–382; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, p. 531; Setton, *The Papacy*, II, p. 327; Alessio Bombaci, “Venezia e l’impresa turca di Otranto”, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 66, (1954), p. 169.
- 9 Giuliano Bonazzi (ed.), *Cronica gestorum in partibus Lombardie et reliquis Italie (A.A. 1476–1482)*, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, xxII/3, (Città del Castello, 1904), pp. 252, 253 and documents 74–78, 80, 84, 95; Cremonesi, *La sfida turca*, pp. 143–143; Kenneth M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, III, (Winconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1975), pp. 323–324; Setton, *The Papacy*, II, 343, 346–351; Kretschmayer, *Geschichte von Venedig*, II, p. 383; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, p. 532; Mario E. Viora, “Angelo Carletti da Chivasso e la crociata contro i Turchi”, *Studi Francescani*, 3 (1925), p. 321; Roger Aubenas and R. Ricard, “La chiesa e il Rinascimento 1449–1517”, *Storia della Chiesa dalle origini fino ai giorni nostri*, xv, (Torino, 1972), p. 110; Edoardo Piva, “L’opposizione diplomatica di Venezia alle mire di Sisto IV su Pesaro e ai tentativi di una crociata contro i Turchi 1480–1481”, *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, N.S. v/1, (1903), pp. 97–98; Pietro Egidi, “La politica del Regno di Napoli negli ultimi mesi dell’anno 1480”, *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, 35, (1910), pp. 697–699, 708; Gino Cozzi and Michael Knapton, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia dalla guerra di Chioggia alla riconquista della Terraferma*, (Torino: Utet, 1986), p. 60; Bombaci, “Venezia e l’impresa”, 180 and 186; Giuseppe Grasso, “Documenti riguardanti la costituzione di una lega contro il Turco nel 1481”, *Giornale Ligustico di Archeologia, Storia e Belle Arti*, 6, (1879), pp. 325, 327; Iorga, (ed.), *Notes et extraites*, IV 1453–1476, (Bucharest, 1915), no. 78, pp. 84, 89, 96.

*d'Italia*. Calls for an alliance of Christian forces and a combined fight against the Turks were made, and forces and funds were gathered. Since the capture of the city,<sup>10</sup> Otranto had been in Turkish hands for 13 months, that is until 10 September 1481. It was generally believed that the attack on the territory of Ferdinand I of Aragon was a consequence of Naples having participated in the anti-Turkish league and the support it granted to the Knights Hospitallers, besieged on the Isle of Rhodes in 1480. Nor was there a shortage of charges blaming Venice for goading the Turks to attack Italy.<sup>11</sup>

Even before the sacking of Otranto, Pope Sixtus IV had sent a papal brief to all Italian cities, requesting money and soldiers to fight the Turks. After the fall of the city, he sent 10,000 ducats to King Ferdinand of Aragon, moreover, the question of organising the league was discussed at the consistory of 14 August 1480. A papal legate, Cardinal Gabriele Rangoni, was sent to Naples, and another brief to European states followed, dated 18 August. It called on the recipients to oppose the Turkish onslaught. On 24 September 1480, Pope Sixtus IV announced in a new bull the introduction of additional indulgences throughout Europe, the proceedings of which were earmarked for the fight against the Turkish aggressor.<sup>12</sup>

The Turkish threat also made waves in Poland. Late in 1480, the first nuncios and collectors (including Marino di Fregeno, Pietro Antonio de Benedetto) arrived in the country; the Pope also entrusted them with his collection of contributions for the crusade, the so-called Rhodes indulgences.<sup>13</sup> Sixtus IV also turned to the King of England, as well as Venice, and Emperor Frederick III.

10 Garbacik, "Kallimach", p. 77; Kretschmayer, *Geschichte von Venedig*, II, p. 389; Malipiero, "Annali veneti", parte prima, p. 130; Bombaci, "Venezia e l'impresa", p. 185 and passim; Piva, "Origine", pp. 49–104; Piva, "L'opposizione diplomatica", pp. 422–429; Ettore Rossi, "Notizie degli storici turchi sull'occupazione di Otranto nel 1480–1481", *Japigia*, 9, fasc. II, (1931), p. 191; "Lamento d'Italia per la presa d'Otranto fatta dai Turchi nel 1480 composto per Vespasiano di Filippo", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 4, (1843), pp. 452–463; Giovanni Pillini, *Il sistema degli stati italiani 1454–1494*, (Venezia: Libreria Universitaria, 1970), pp. 116–117.

11 Malipiero, "Annali veneti", parte prima, pp. 124–129; Rossi, "Notizie degli storici", pp. 182–184, 186; Viora, "Angelo Carletti", p. 321; Archivio di Stato di Genova (henceforth ASG), *Litterarum*, no. 1802, f. 137 v; Felice Fossati, "Alcuni dubbi sul contegno di Venezia durante la ricuperazione d'Otranto (1480–1481)", *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*. N.S., 12 (1906), pp. 5–35; Setton, *The Papacy*, II, 372.

12 Egidi, "La politica", pp. 698, 711, 728; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, 533–534; Viora, "Angelo Claretto", p. 322; Grasso, "Documenti", no. 1; Setton, *The Papacy*, p. 364; Bonazzi, (ed.), *Cronica gestorum*, pp. 7, 253; Giuseppe Chiesa (ed.), "Il diario della città di Roma dall'anno 1480 all'anno 1492 di Antonio de Vascho", *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, xxIII/3, (Città di Castello, 1904), p. 493.

13 Augustino Theiner (ed.), "Vetera Monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae", II 1410–1572, *Brevia romanorum pontificum*, (Romae, 1861), pp. 214–215, no. 233.

King Louis XI of France replied by assuring that he would participate in the crusade, and he promised to send a special legate to Rome prior to that. On 1 June 1481, the legate arrived in Venice to propose joining in a common fight against the Ottomans. The papal encyclical was sent once again to all Christian states on 8 April 1481.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, Sultan Mehemmed II died unexpectedly on 3 May 1481 while preparing for a new expedition against the Isle of Rhodes. The news was known in Venice by 29 May, and it reached Rome on 2 June. Solemn services and processions continued there for three days *ob quo maxima festa cellebrata sunt in totta Italia laudantes Deum*.<sup>15</sup> On 21 May, Ferdinand of Aragon was informed about this significant event from Ragusa, and he was told that Turkey was in a state of disarray and turmoil. The King was also encouraged to carry out a swift recovery of Otranto, and the following words were addressed to him: *ch'ella voglia fare adesso el sforzo per terra et per mare perchè adesso el venuto el tempo, che la Vostra Maestà si fara honore più che lo Re predecessore*. On 8 June 1481, Sixtus IV informed Florence about the death of Mehemmed II and invited the republic to participate in the newly organised anti-Turkish coalition.<sup>16</sup> The death of Mehemmed was construed as the liberation of the Christian world from a threat, and it was celebrated all over Italy. Genoa too had reasons to be pleased. On 4 June 1481, the Doge, together with the entire Consiglio degli Anziani, participated in a solemn service publicly praising God for deliverance from the aggressor, offering thanks for the saving of the Island

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- 14 Bolesław Stachoń, *Polityka Polski wobec Turcji i akcji antyturckiej w XV w. do utraty Kilii i Białogrodu (1484)*, (Lwów: Nakł. Tow. Naukowego, 1930), p. 188; Viora, "Angelo Claretti", pp. 323, 329; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, 537, 538; Iorga (ed.), *Notes et extraits*, V (1476–1500), no. 99, 101, 109, 110; ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 30, f. 18; Aubenas and Ricard, *Storia della Chiesa*, XV, p. 110; Enrico Carusi (ed.), "Il Diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra", *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, XXI/1/3, (Città di Castello, 1904), p. 43; Predelli (ed.) *I libri commemoriali*, IV, libro XVI, (Venezia, 1896), no. 172; Setton, *The Papacy*, II, p. 370; Massimo Petrocchi, *La politica della Santa Sede di fronte all'invasione ottomana 1444–1718*, (Napoli: Libreria scientifica, 1955), p. 48.
- 15 ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 30, f. 16 v; Bonazzi (ed.), "Cronica gestorum", 256, no. 98, 100, 102; Grasso, "Documenti", s. 330; Rossi, "Notizie degli storici", p. 186; "Il Diario Romano di Jacopo Gherardi", p. 53; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, 539; Samuele Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, IV, (Venezia: Giusto Fuga, 1973), p. 399; Diomede Toni (ed.), "Il Diario Romano di Gaspare Pontani (1481–1492)", *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, III/2 (Città di Castello, 1908), p. 4.
- 16 Vincent Makuscev (ed.), *Monumenta Historia Slavorum Meridionalum vicinorumque populorum e tabulariis et bibliothecis italicis*, (henceforth MHSM), II, (Belgrade, 1882), no. 13; Giuseppe Müller, (ed.), *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll'Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXXI*, (Roma, 1966), p. 233, no. 195; ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 30, f. 16 v.



of Chios, and expressing the hope that *oblata est nobis facultas recuperandi de manibus suis quae a nobis arripuerat*. A day earlier, Protettori della Casa di San Giorgio, who used to see over the Genoese colonies in Crimea, read out letters from the Duke of Milan, notifying about the death of Mehemmed II. The momentary turmoil caused by the death of the Sultan and the support obtained from other states made it possible for Ferdinand of Aragon to recapture in September 1481 Otranto, surrendered by the Ottoman troops, after negotiations.<sup>17</sup>

In the second half of the 15th century, many Genoese lived in southern Poland. After the fall of Genoese colonies in the Crimea, some Genoese found refuge in Poland, and a large group were resettled in Constantinople, forming the so-called *Contrata Caffensium*, while others remained in the Crimea, waiting for an appropriate moment and clinging on to the hope of being liberated. Genoa too was getting ready for a counterstrike against the Ottoman Empire, money was collected and a fleet readied. To achieve this, a decision was even reached to make a formal agreement with Venice, and Bartolomeo Senarega, personal secretary of the Doge Battista Fregoso, was sent on a mission. On 3 March 1481, he presented a proposal to take up a joint fight against the Porte at a session of the Venetian Senate.<sup>18</sup>

The intensive preparations for the approaching clash with the infidels are also corroborated by clauses in Genoese testaments. For example, on 11 August 1480, testator Francesco Rivano stated that his last will was being prepared at the time of preparations for an expedition *contra paganos infideles*, in another one, of 13 June 1481, the patron of a galley Giovanni Caldera drafted his testament immediately before setting off *contra inimicissimum Teucrum*. At the moment of leaving for the East *cum felici classe galearum contra Turchos* on 16 June of the same year, Cristoforo Bolero wrote down his testament, and on 20 June Filippo Balestrazzi followed suit *in presenti classe felici contra Turchos parata*, as did Simone da Novi, going *versus partes orientales contra Turchos*. A testimony to the readiness of the fleet to set out for the East is the fact that late

17 Bonazzi (ed.), "*Cronica gestorum*", pp. 101, 105, 257; Gian Giacomo Musso, "Le ultime speranze dei Genovesi per il Levante; ricerche d'archivio," in *Genova, La Liguria e l'Oltremare tra Medioevo ed età moderna. Studi e ricerche d'archivio*, ed. Raffaele Belvederi, (Genova: Fratelli Bozzi, 1974), pp. 11–12; Makuscev (ed.), МНСМ. II, no. 15, 16, 17; Canale, *Storia della Crimea*, II, (Genova, 1856), p. 154 and passim; Ilenia Romana Cassetta and Elettra Ercolino, "La prise d'Otrante (1480–81), entre sources chrétiennes et turques", *Turcica*, 34 (2002), pp. 266–268.

18 Musso, "Le ultime speranze", p. 5; Guglielmo Heyd, *Le colonie commerciali degli Italiani in Oriente nel Medio Evo*, I, (Venezia-Torino: Antonelli & Bassadonna, 1866), p. 161; ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 30, f. 1 r.

in July 1481, Protettori di San Giorgio issued an order to the captains of four galleys to set sail for the Black Sea.<sup>19</sup>

Gian Giacomo Musso, a great expert on Genoese history, quoted many other source references found in the Archive of Genoa that corroborate intensive preparations for the expedition against the Turks, the stockpiling of food, especially cereals, and various types of weapons. The case of a Genoese named Francesco da Asti, a blacksmith and manufacturer of bombards, provides proof that they were realistic and advanced; having collected his wage as a crewman of Lodovico Spinola's ship going east, he simply jumped ship.<sup>20</sup>

The planned expedition also resulted in a certain degree of animation and hope among the states of the Balkan Peninsula, among others in Wallachia, Moldavia, Bosnia, and Albania. In the summer of 1480, King Matthias Corvinus undertook a successful campaign against the Turks, which reached the territory of Ottoman-occupied Bosnia. In December of the same year, he agreed with Pope Sixtus IV to organise a joint war against the Turks, and in January 1481 he even issued a request for military aid to Albrecht of Brandenburg.<sup>21</sup> The commotion on the Balkan Peninsula was also reported by the ruler of Naples, the rector and the City Council of Ragusa (2 June 1481), and the Aragon correspondent Paladino de Gondoli staying in Ragusa (14 June of the same year), informing that Matthias Corvinus had moved to Smederevo and sent the army towards Bosnia. In July 1481, having defeated Basarab, the ruler of Wallachia, and his Turkish allies, Stephen of Moldavia was ready to take action to recover the Crimea together with the Genoese and the Tatars.<sup>22</sup>

The death of Mehemmed II on 3 May 1481 and the fight for the succession of their father's throne in Istanbul between his two sons, Bāyezīd and Djem, only brought a momentary reprieve, yet it also brought hope for Genoa for the political weakening of the Porte, and an opportunity to recover the domains lost in the East. The return of Mengli Girey to the Crimea in 1478, who sought support and a counterbalance against the vindictive protectorate of the Sultan, as well as the limiting of his power and revenues, brought hope of support from the local people in a future confrontation against the Ottomans. Believing in the efficiency and purpose of the efforts made to recover the lost domains by

19 Musso, "Le ultime speranze", pp. 8–9; Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 444–445, no. 75.

20 Musso, "Le ultime speranze," pp. 9–10.

21 Fabio Cusin, *Il confine orientale d'Italia nella politica europea del XIV e XV secolo*, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1937), p. 222; Iorga (ed.), *Notes et extraits*, v, no. 100, 106, 107; Roberto Sabatino Lopez, *Storia delle colonie genovesi nel Mediterraneo*, (Genoa: Zanichelli, 1996), p. 341.

22 Makusev, (ed.), *МНМ*, II, no. 15; Olgierd Górka, (ed.), *Kronika czasów Stefana Wielkiego mołdawskiego (1457–1499)*, (Kraków, 1931), p. 35; N. Iorga, *Studii istorice asupra Chiliei și Cetății Albe*, (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1899), p. 93; Denize, *Țările Române*, pp. 122–123.

the Black Sea, the Doge and the *Uffizio di Romania* sent Secretary Bartolomeo Senarega from Genoa to Rome on 5 June 1481. His task was to convince the Pope to have the papal fleet set sail towards the Crimea immediately, under Cardinal Paolo Fregoso, reinforced by the units fighting at Otranto, with the aim of recovering the city from Turkish hands. Increasing the number of the galleys at the expense of the Republic of Genoa was also envisaged. Following the instructions received, Senarega conducted his mission to the Vatican, informing Girolamo Riario, the Neapolitan ambassador residing in Rome, about all the details.<sup>23</sup>

The authorities of Genoa sent to Rome a special legate, Doctor of Law Luca Grimaldi, just a few days later (on 9 June 1481) with detailed instructions, so as to champion and emphasise the merits of the cause. His other task was simultaneous mediation, together with the Genoese resident at the papal court, Raffaello di Odone, in matters concerning the inability of the Republic to fulfil the duties imposed on it by the Apostolic See. The matter in question was the construction and furnishing of five galleys that the Pope had demanded to support the Christian fleet that set off to recover Otranto. In turn, the Republic supported the proposal to make Cardinal Paolo Fregoso the commander of the Christian fleet.<sup>24</sup> As early as 12 June 1481, Giovanni Francesco Gazzoldo, a doctor of law from Mantua, informed the Protectors of St George that the Tatar Khan was ready to surrender Caffa and other cities in the Crimea into Christian hands. The former Genoese residents of Crimean colonies, Gianotto Lomellini and Andreolo Guasco, expressed similar views in June of the same year.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, inhabitants of former Genoese trading posts in the Crimea considered a plan to recover them. One of them was Andreolo Guasco (de Guasco), who had found refuge in Poland after the fall of Soldaia. He had lost no hope that an opportune moment for the liberation of the Crimea would emerge, and that he would be able to return there. On 6 December 1480, he sent a letter, written in Vilnius, to his friend, Doctor of Law and Letters Giovanni Francesco di Gazzoldo from Mantua, notifying the lawyer that he had learned from Mengli Girey about the favourable attitude of the Tatar ruler to the return of Italians to the Crimea. He was ready to return Caffa and the settlements under its authority, including Soldaia, as well as the territory of the former Gothia, to Christians. Guasco believed the Tatar ruler was clearly seeking allies

23 Ludwik Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów*, I (1377–1499), (Warszawa: Skł. gł. Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1930), p. 340; G. Grasso, "Documenti," p. 330, no. 16; Musso, "Le ultime speranze," 30.

24 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 329, 331, no. 3, 8, 9, 13, 19; Musso, "Le ultime speranze," p. 18; Carusi, (ed.), *Il Diario Romano di Jacopo Gherard*, pp. 59–61.

25 Grasso, "Documenti," no. 20, 21, 27.

for, as he wrote, unless his proposal was accepted by the Banco di San Giorgio, the Tatar would address it to the Venetians, the Duke of Milan, the Pope, or the King of Hungary. Having given serious consideration to Guasco's report, Francesco di Gazzoldo notified the Protettori di San Giorgio in Genoa of the contents of the letter he had received on 12 June 1481.<sup>26</sup> Other Genoese living in Poland also turned to them at that time; they were: Gianotto Lomellino (Lomellini) and Gabriele de Promontorio (Prementore). The first is mentioned in sources in 1453–54 as a patron of a galley going to Caffa, who held the office of consul in Soldaia in 1457–59, and later in Caffa in 1465; there he was elected a *ministrale* in 1466. His activity in Lviv is corroborated in the years 1472–75, when he made himself known as a merchant travelling along the Caffa–Lviv–Genoa route. In March 1475, he was made the captain-commander of the settlements lying around the Caffa fortress for a period of 26 months.<sup>27</sup>

Gabriele de Promontorio is recorded in sources on Caffa in 1451–53, and in 1475, where he was among others, the supervisor at the Uffizio dei Grani. After the trading posts of Crimea were overrun by the Turks, both found themselves in Poland.<sup>28</sup> The aforementioned Andreolo Guasco, and his brothers Demetrio and Teodoro, owned Scuti, a small settlement in the vicinity of Soldaia. In 1474–75, they went into financial litigation against the Genoese consul in the city, Cristoforo Di Negro.<sup>29</sup> The same Andreolo Guasco, who after the fall of the Crimea also found his way to Poland, must have made the Polish royal court

26 Vigna (ed.), "Codice diplomatico", Tomo. II /2, pp. 292, 293, 320, 322, 408, 409; Grasso, "Documenti," 331, no. 201; Sergej Antol'evič Sekerinskij, Oleg Vladimirovič Volobuev, Konstantin Konstantinovič Kogonašvili, "La fortezza di Sudak", *Storici sovietici del Levante genovese*, (Genoa, 1985), p. 114; Guglielmo Heyd, *Storia del commercio del Levante*, p. 972.

27 ASG, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, no. 1799, f. 261r, 261 v, 262 v; nr. 1801, f. 66 v, 67 r; Jan Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska wieków średnich w Polsce*, (Warszawa, 1922), 77; Gian Giacomo Musso, "Nuove ricerche d'archivio su Genova e l'Europa centro-orientale nell'ultimo medioevo", *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 83 (1971), pp. 33, 135; Musso, "Il tramonto di Caffa genovese", *Miscellanea di storia ligure in memoria di Giorgio Falco*, (Genova: Università di Genova, 1966), pp. 322–323; Grasso, "Documenti", no. 21; "Codice diplomatico", II /1, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/1, (Genoa, 1871), no. 18, 15–16, no. 30, 662, 663, 710, 1100, 1127; "Codice diplomatico", II /2, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/2, (Genoa, 1879), 831, 907.

28 Codice diplomatico, I, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VI, (Genova, 1868), 46, 54, no. 496; *ibidem*, II, parte I, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/1, no. 681; *ibidem*, II /2, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/2, 279; Sandra Origone, "L'amministrazione genovese a Caffa nel secolo XV", G. Pistarino (ed.), *Saggi e documenti*, III, (Genoa, 1983), no. 95, 122, 124.

29 "Codice diplomatico", II /1, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, VII/2, no. 1, 292, no. 2, 3, 5–9, 11–15, here, too, a separate treatise on the controversy between the brothers Guasco and the consul of Soldaia—Cristoforo Di Negro, was published. 506–519; Iorga (ed.), *Notes et extraits*, II, p. 158. Scuti is Tassilli (Czoban-Kule), a Tatar village, visited in 1837

interested in the plan to recover the Crimea. This is evident from his letter addressed to the *Protettori delle Compere di San Giorgio*, written in Venice on 20 June 1481. As he reminisced, he arrived in the city of lagoons on orders from the Polish king, and it was there that he expressed ardent words of encouragement to the authorities of Genoa, ensuring them about the positive attitude of the people of Caffa concerning attempts to recover the city. He emphasised that he always hoped that the Black Sea domains would return to Christian rule, especially once the former threat was long gone.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps influenced by the news they had received, the *Protettori delle Compere di San Giorgio* discussed the question of obtaining appropriate financing for covering the costs of an intended expedition to the East at the general meeting on 3 June 1481. An offer regarding a sale of certain estates held by the Bank was made, and responsibility for the task of carrying out preparations was entrusted to eight citizens elected at that time.<sup>31</sup> The matters were discussed again on 22 June 1481, and after obtaining the approval of the Doge and his council, *Uffizio di Moneta*, the eight delegates, and the *Protettori di San Giorgio*, a decision was made to take specific steps to recover the eastern domains, by granting security on all mortgage and state bonds.<sup>32</sup>

In June of the same year, the authorities of the Genoese Republic accredited a new representative to the Apostolic See in the person of Doctor of Law and Letters Luca Grimaldi, who was entrusted with the task of leading negotiations on the recovery of the Eastern domains. As emerges from the contents of the brief sent to Genoa on 16 June 1481, the Pope favoured the planned expedition, which also received support from the Pope's right-hand man and nephew, Girolamo Riario. What Sixtus IV, however, believed to be most significant at the

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by travelers from France, in the account described by Anatoly Demidov, *Podróż w Rossyji południowej i Krymie*, I, (Warszawa, 1845), p. 296.

30 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 331, 338, no. 27; *O magnifici domini, excitetur precor potentia Januensium! Maritimi milites Januensium excitentur deprecor! Nomen gloriosissimum et fama olim laudata renovetur! Nonne vidimus in diebus nostris naves Januensium intrare in mare maiore, invito illo tremendissimo rege turcorum? Cur non posset nunc, quia cessavit nomen tremendum ipsius? Nunc quum intendo quale lucrum, qualis gloria, qualis honor Januensium in recuperando tantas magnifica civitates, tantam provinciam, tantos populos fidelissimos? Ego commoror in Polonia. Veni hic iussu serenissimi regis Poloniae, et feci que mandavit mihi et ad ipsum revertor*: Heyd, *Storia del commercio*, 972; Roberto Lopez, *Storia delle colonie genovesi*, 356; Geo Pistarino, *I Gin dell'Oltremare*, (Genoa: Civico Istituto Colombiano, 1988), 476; E. Piva, "L'opposizione diplomatica", p. 148.

31 Grasso, "Documenti," p. 333; Canale, *Storia della Crimea*, III, (Genova, 1856), p. 154.

32 Canale, *Storia della Crimea*, III, pp. 156–157; Grasso, "Documenti", pp. 334, 381–389, no. 27.

time was the dispatch of the fleet, which he blessed on 4 July 1481, to reinforce the navies of other European states heading for Apulia to recapture Otranto.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time Bāyezīd, the elder son of Mehemed II, entered Istanbul assisted by Gedik Ahmed Pasha on 19 May 1481, while his younger brother, Djem, captured Bursa. A struggle between the two rivals for their father's throne was in the air. Eager to exploit the emerging opportunity as well as they could, the Doge and the *Consiglio degli Anziani* decided to test the attitude of the Polish ruler towards a potential Genoese-Tatar alliance to undertake a joint fight against Turks for the recovery of Crimea. That is why, on 5 July 1481 they appointed two legates in the persons of Bartolomeo di Fregoso (Campofregoso) and Lodisio Fieschi (Lodisio Fiesco), who, together with four companions, were to visit the courts of the Tatar Khan Mengli Girey and the Polish King Casimir the Jagiellon, and furnished them (on 7 July) with detailed instructions.<sup>34</sup> They were to pass themselves off as merchants, and make sure they were not recognised, select shorter and more reliable roads and routes, and moreover to seek out and take guides: not many but trusted and dedicated ones. Once they had reached their destination, they were to declare their reverence for and pay tribute to the Tatar ruler, and present him with the gifts carried with them. Presenting the letters of accreditation drafted in Greek, they were to express their joy at the possibility of embarking on efforts to recover Caffa and other former Genoese trading posts. In their discussions, they were to assure that a fleet composed of large and small galleys, reinforced by ships from Chios, would arrive within 15 days.<sup>35</sup> Having completed their expedition to Mengli Girey, one of the envoys should remain at the Tatar court, and the other proceed to the Polish court. As Geo Pistarino assumes, the Tatar Khan seemed to be at the disposal of the Genoese, and eager to provide assistance in the recovery of Caffa. The return of rich Genoese cities, paying a significant

33 Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, 540; Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 331–333, 369–370, 391, no. 22, 30, 31; Canale, *Storia della Crimea*, III, p. 155.

34 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 334, 398–399, 405–406, 409–416, no. 36, 41, 45; Heyd, *Le colonie commerciali*, p. 972; Malipiero, "Annali veneti," p. 131. In 1456, Lodisio Fieschi was elected commissar and general collector from the regions of Tuscany, Lombardy and Genoese Republic to collect money for the anti-Turkish crusade. Carusi (ed.), *Il Diario Romano di Jacopo Gherardi*, p. 53, he was also the owner of a bank in Genoa involving significant capitals in Banco di San Giorgio, which went bankrupt in 1474; Malowist, *Kaffa*, 88; Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The foreign Relations of Turkey 1481–1512*, (Urbana: Univ. Of Illinois Press, 1948), pp. 21–22, 29.

35 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 409–416 no. 45; Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age, 1300–1600*, (Phoenix Press, 2000) p. 42.

tribute, was an appealing prospect and it brought back memories of his independent rule.<sup>36</sup>

The Genoese legates bound for the Crimea were also ordered to contact Zaccarias de Ghisolfi (Grisolfi), former Prince of Matrega (today's Taman), lying on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, which, after the fall of the city, courageously opposed the Turks in the Caucasus together with the remaining Italians and Circasians. Still in 1482, he turned to the Bank of St George in Genoa for financial support, counting on advantageous results of the guerilla skirmishes he was conducting. The metropolis counted on Ghisolfi being able to provide the envoys with valuable counsel and assistance, as he was in touch with the surviving Italian families.<sup>37</sup> While talking to Mengli Girey, the Genoese legates were to request letters of credence and *salvus conductus* through the territory he oversaw, up to the borders of the Polish state. Having ventured into Poland, the legates were to behave as they did at the Khan's: present their letters of credentials and gifts, explain the purpose of the mission, i.e. the intention to recover their former estates in the Crimea, with the support of the Tatar Khan. Further into the mission, they were to investigate the attitude of the Polish court to embarking on this holy and Christian expedition, and ask the king for potential assistance. Most important here was the awarding of *salvus conductus* for every Genoese and the mercenary soldiers crossing Poland, as well as a permit to recruit on the territory of Poland and Lithuania at the expense of the government of the Genoese Republic.<sup>38</sup> Should they consider it necessary, having discerned the mood of the court, the legates could present gifts to certain dignitaries, and also if necessary contact the captains of the galleys anchored by Chios, Christoforo Cattaneo and Niccolò de Brignale. In all their correspondence they were to use a code that was to be given to them. Eager to encourage the delegated legates to make extensive attempts at bringing the talks and negotiations to a favourable end, the authorities of Genoa ensured them that, should the Crimean domains be regained, they would be nominated governors of the territory. Moreover, the instructions also contained a precise list of the envisaged costs of the legacy, including a list of gifts for the Tatar khan and the Polish king. Altogether, 400 ducats were earmarked for the purpose.<sup>39</sup>

36 Pistarino, *IGin*, 476.

37 Lopez, *Storia delle colonie*, 340; Aleksander Aleksandrovich Vasiliev, "The Goths in the Crimea" (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936), 240; Pistarino, *IGin*, pp. 468, 485; Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 335, 412.

38 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 335, 412–413.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 414–415, 422. It was assigned to the Polish king: *Item per la Regia Maestà de Polonia parmi triginta duo de brocatello; item per suo secretario parmi triginta duo de*

Perhaps it was Gianotto Lomellino, author of an unsigned letter addressed to the authorities of Genoa in July 1481, who guided the Genoese legates. In his letter, Lomellino recommended his services, emphasising that he enjoyed respect like none other in Poland, knew routes by sea and land, had a *salvus conductus* issued by the authorities of the Republic of Venice, the Holy Roman Emperor and Hungarian king. He had already taken all the roads to Caffa without loss of life or limb, not only leading his female slaves but also among others accompanying Giovanni de Senarega, whom he brought safely and at little expense to Caffa. He had already discussed the subject with the King of Poland and received a *salvus conductus* from him as well. Moreover, he declared that he had a command of Polish, as well as some German, Mongolian, and a little Greek.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, an expedition to the East was prepared in Genoa, galleys and their patrons were appointed, and contracts were drafted with them to oblige them to fulfil the duties they undertook in an appropriate manner. To obtain more precise and quick information, the authorities of Genoa sent their agent, Luca Massola, to the source of the best news—Venice—as a would be tradesman. His presence in the city was confirmed from 7 June to the end of September 1481, and in November of the same year he had already moved to Milano. The accounts he sent to his father residing in Genoa were interspersed with information on trade. When relaying important information on political events he used code.<sup>41</sup> The reason for his endeavours *pro rebus orientalibus* come up in all his accounts, whose number as well as abundance of information were especially lavish in August 1481. The content of the messages sent by Massola suggests that he had major sums at his disposal, which were related to the precise fulfilment of the duties entrusted to him. For example, he paid a messenger who went to Caffa *via Polonia* in May 1481.<sup>42</sup> It seems that at that

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*comacato; item per la dicta Regia Maestà tante diverse specie per ducati decem;* Musso, “Le ultime speranze,” p. 33.

40 Grasso, “Documenti,” pp. 416–417, no. 46 contains a letter from 7 (?) July 1481 without the signature and designation of the place of its preparation. Its author may be Niccolò Camogli or Gianotto Lomellino, often used as a courier, who at the beginning of 1471 moved three officials and members of their service from Genoa in Crimea: “Codice diplomatico,” II/1, pp. 697–698 no. 936.

41 Grasso, “Documenti,” no. 17, 26, 47. The contract between the specific patron of the galleys and the Genoa authorities sounded as follows: *Cosmas de Nigrano patronus unius sue navis existentie in portu Janue conducte per magnifica et spectabilia Officia deputata super provisionibus orientalibus*, pp. 335–336 no. 58, 425–428 no. 60, pp. 430–431 no. 63, pp. 469–470 no. 98, pp. 474–475 no. 104, pp. 477–478 no. 107, p. 486 no. 116; Musso, “Le ultime speranze,” pp. 30–31.

42 Musso, “Le ultime speranze,” pp. 31–32.



time, Pope Sixtus IV also seriously considered an expedition against the Turks in the East. It remains unknown, however, whether its purposes were construed the same way in Rome and Genoa. The discovery of a collection of documents known as *Cartularium classis Orientis* by G.G. Musso in the Genoese Archive shows that the papacy made a series of attempts to organise Christian forces to recover Otranto from the Turks and to move further east. On 13 August 1481, the Apostolic See sent its courier to Venice via Vicenza, *pro Petro nuntio qui in-venit in Vincentami cum literis Sancti Domini Nostri Pape pro illis de Caffa*. At the same time, certain circles in Rome discussed the moving of the Christian fleet against Valona, immediately after the liberation of Otranto.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, the authorities of the Genoese Republic did not relent in their efforts to convince the Apostolic See about the advisability and desirability of undertaking an expedition to the East. That is why Luca Grimaldi, the envoy to the court in Rome, received ever more instructions, and negotiations on the matter were conducted at the court of Naples. Sixtus IV answered the authorities of Genoa that he was seriously considering the possibility of sending a Christian fleet to the East, while Ferdinand of Aragon at least initially (i.e. in July 1481) agreed to help the Genoese in their fight against the Turks.<sup>44</sup>

Andreolo Guasco encouraged the authorities of Genoa to move to the East, dispatching two letters from Venice: on 8 and 13 July 1481. Aware of the realities of his preparations, he also informed about Mengli Girey's support for the cause, as he had received plenty of letters from the Khan. Guasco cooperated with the official envoy of Genoa to Venice, Massola, and with trusted people from the Crimea. As he claimed, he had received news from Florence and Venice that the firstborn of Mehemed II was well disposed towards Christians. Guasco himself, as he had earlier mentioned, hoped for an uprising of the local populace in Caffa and the neighbouring settlements. This conviction was confirmed by the Genoese ambassador to the Apostolic See, L. Grimaldi, in a letter of 24th July 1481 addressed to *Uffizio di San Giorgio*. He informed among others that he had arrived in Rome from Caffa, *uno de casale del Milano*, only 14 days earlier, and assured that both the Jews and the Greeks, and the Italians remaining in the Crimea had tried to combine their forces with Zaccarias Ghisolfi of Matrega for a future confrontation with the Turkish forces.<sup>45</sup>

43 Ibid., 31. The unsigned manuscript quoted by the author, unfortunately, was not found in the Genoese Archive during the query conducted in 1998; E. Rossi, "Notizie degli storici", p. 187.

44 Grasso, "Documenti", p. 336 no. 59, 60, 425 no. 57, 436 no. 67, pp. 462–463 no. 90, pp. 464–465 no. 93, 468 no. 96, pp. 469–470 no. 97, 98.

45 Ibid., pp. 419–420 no. 50, p. 425 no. 57, p. 442 no. 72.

In the meantime, Lodisio Fieschi and Bartolomeo Fregoso, who were appointed legates to the Tatars and to Poland in May 1481, swore to fulfil the mission entrusted to them the best they could before the authorities and the *Protettori di San Giorgio* on 12 July of the same year, and set off a few days later. On 26 July they reached Serravalle di Como (situated west of Como), from which they reached the town of Hall, that is on the border with Austria, via Vicenza. A few days later they arrived in Vienna, from where they sent *avvisi* to the metropolis. Having received the necessary *litterae passus*, they intended to set out for Pressburg (today's Bratislava), and later, omit Buda and aim for Kaschau (Kosice).<sup>46</sup> Eventually, having left Vienna, the envoys went to Buda, and later to Kaschau, skipping Pressburg altogether due to an epidemic. On 30 August, they stayed in a village referred to in their account as Bartha, close to the border with Ruthenia, hoping to reach Kiev around 15 September.<sup>47</sup>

In the meantime, having seen to all the matters entrusted to him by the Polish king, Guasco returned to Poland. Most probably, the letters of 10 September of the same year sent to him by the *Protettori di San Giorgio* and the letters from the Genoese authorities to the Polish king of the same date failed to find him in Venice. A letter on the same matter was also addressed to the Royal Secretary, Filippo Buonaccorsi—Callimachus. The protectors of the Bank of St George had sent yet another letter to the King of Poland back on 12 June, returning to the matter of the talks conducted by Guasco at the Polish court concerning the attempts at recovering the estates in Crimea and joining the fray against the Turks, and they vouched for their envoys and the matters they presented. In the meantime, the envoys, who had been sent from Genoa, reached Kiev on 22 September, and they hoped to receive the right of safe conduct so as to reach the headquarters of Mengli Girey safely. Officially, they were merchants, trading among others in pearls, which was to enable them to carry on with their intended plans.<sup>48</sup> They waited for three days in Kiev, yet having learned that a legate of Mengli Girey was in talks at the Polish court, they decided to split up. Lodisio Fieschi was to take two servants and set off for Vilnius, where King Casimir the Jagiellon was sojourning at the time. Fregoso was to stay put and send one of his servants to the Khan in secret, notifying him of his coming arrival. Here, they also received the news that the Turkish troops stationed in Caffa consisted of approximately 300–400 soldiers, and that the city's approximately 6000–7000 Christian inhabitants were well-disposed and

46 Ibid., p. 423 no. 55, no. 73, pp. 463–464 no. 92; Musso, "Le ultime speranze," p. 32.

47 Grasso, "Documenti," p. 471 no. 99, report from 30 August 1481.

48 Ibid., pp. 475–476 no. 105, pp. 476–477 no. 106; ASG, *Archivio Segreto, Litterarum*, no. 1804, f. 136 v, 137 r.

remembered the old authorities. That is why, in a letter of 29 November 1481, the legates expressed the opinion that the prepared armed expedition, with the support of the Polish king, the Tatar khan, Zaccarias Ghisolfi of Matrega, and Italians, Greeks and Armenians from Caffa could realistically result in the return of the former Black Sea colonies to the Republic of Genoa. They also believed that the support of Stephen of Moldavia could be counted upon, as he had gathered a great army to oppose Turkish expansion.<sup>49</sup> As the contents of the accounts by the Genoese envoys prove, Lodisio Fieschi was heard by the King of Poland with attentiveness and interest. The last letter the legates sent to the authorities of Genoa is dated 29 November. This point likewise marks when information concerning the further course of the mission and the progress of the entire case ends.<sup>50</sup> It is probable that the Genoese diplomats never ascertained the complex political situation in the region, where Moscow had allied with Crimea back in 1480, in answer to Lithuania's support for the Golden Horde. This was also connected to the peace signed by King Casimir the Jagiellon with Turkey for "two lives", which, as Jerzy Ochmański assumes, caused increasing animosity and controversies between Poland and Lithuania on the one hand, and the rulers of the Crimea in 1480–1532.<sup>51</sup> It is not certain either, whether the reply from the Tatar Khan, dated 30 December 1481, still found the Genoese legates in Poland. In the note, Mengli Girey suggested that the Genoese join the cortege of the Tatar legacy returning from Poland, and set off for the Crimea together.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, the diplomatic efforts and talks on the international arena conducted by official messengers of Genoa and the former residents of Black Sea colonies would not relent. One of them was the aforementioned Andreolo Guasco, who probably set forth from Venice to Nuremberg, from where he sent

49 Grasso, "Documenti", pp. 341, 482–484, no. 113, pp. 482–484, pp. 486–488, no. 117; Lopez, *Storia delle colonie*, p. 340; Feliks Koneczny, "Rzekoma koalicja Litwy z Tatarami przeciw Moskwie w roku 1480", *Ateneum Wileńskie*, 1, (1923), p. 393. Indeed, in August 1481, Mengli Girey sent his legation to the Polish court to Vilnius, where Kazimierz Jagiellończyk stayed at that time.

50 G. Grasso, "Documenti", p. 342 no. 120, 489; Musso, "Le ultime speranze," p. 32. The costs of the Genoese mission to Poland amounted to 4,298 lire.

51 Jerzy Ochmański, "Organizacja obrony w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim przed napadami Tatarów krymskich w XV–XVI wieku", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, 5, (1960), pp. 356–357.

52 Franz Miklosich and Joseph Muller (eds.), *Acta et diplomata graeca res graecas italiasque illustrantia*, 111, (Vienna, 1865), no. 10; Grasso, "Documenti", no. 120.

a letter to the Genoese resident in Milan, Luca Massola, which even mentioned Caffa being recovered.<sup>53</sup>

Even on the 2 and later on 16 August, the Pope informed the Genoese authorities that his fleet participating in the campaign to recover Otranto would fight until the city was liberated from the Turks. Nonetheless, after the recapture of the city on 13 September 1481 by the united forces of Christian states, a part of the papal, Aragon, and Portuguese fleet remained on the spot. It is likely that the attitude to the expedition to the East that the Genoese had prepared changed precisely after the victory over the Turks in Otranto. Heartfelt congratulations on the victories sent on 12 October to King Ferdinand of Aragon by Doge Battista de Campofregoso were to no avail. Grimaldi, the Genoese envoy to the Roman court, also informed about the Pope's change of mind in this matter.<sup>54</sup> He personally did not believe in the promises of Sixtus IV, who, inspired by his nephew Girolamo Riario, was at the time interested in obtaining appanages for him. In turn, the Genoese authorities believed that a success in the East could only be achieved by immediate action, exploiting the internal turmoil after the death of Mehmed II.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, the ambitions of the King of Naples, who did everything to direct the united Christian forces against the Turkish possessions in Albania, came to the surface. On 23 September 1481, the Pope himself sent special instructions concerning the above to one of the captains of a galley stationed near Otranto. At the same time, voices about mobilising a major fleet in Istanbul were heard. Moreover, the news sent from Venice, which was reluctant about the eastern expedition organised by Genoa, was also disheartening.<sup>56</sup> It was suspected that the intentions of the Pope's nephew Girolamo Riario were not clear-cut. On 9 September 1481, he arrived in Venice, and was cordially welcomed by the Doge and Signoria. Unconfirmed information about Ferdinand of Aragon supposed intentions to take over Caffa himself was circulated. In such circumstances, the fact that the authorities of Genoa sent their galleys not to Otranto but as reinforcement for patrols of their eastern estates, that is to Chios, is no surprise. At the same time, one of the captains was authorised to take part in potential negotiations with the victorious

53 Grasso, "Documenti," p. 485, no. 116. Luca Massola from Milan wrote on 12 November 1481: *Sunt hic cum Simone Fatinanti litere de Norumberg Andreoli Guaschi de XXIV decursi. Advisat intellexisse a ceteris mercatoribus, in ipso loco ex Polonia deportatis, ut in ipsa civitate vulgus erat ut nostri rehabuerint locum Caffe; et sic placuirit pio Christo et gloriose Matri sue.*

54 Ibid., pp. 484–485 no. 114; ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 30, f. 29 r, 32 v.

55 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 444–445 no. 78, pp. 461–462 no. 89.

56 Ibid., p. 337; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, II, 542.

successor to Mehemed II. On 22 September 1481, Pope Sixtus IV addressed a brief to all Christian states, informing that a Congress was to be held in Rome in November, to which the states were to send representatives to agree on a further course of action against the Ottomans.<sup>57</sup> A proposal to challenge the Ottomans on their own territory, suggested by Ferdinand of Aragon, did not, however, meet with general acceptance. It was opposed by the commander of the papal fleet, Cardinal P. Fregoso, other patrons of galleys stationed in Otranto, and also the Duke of Calabria, Alfonso of Aragon. No one even mentioned an expedition to the Black Sea. This is how the meticulously prepared plan that might have helped weaken the position of the Ottomans and revive a bastion of Christianity on the Black Sea collapsed. Nor did any armed action on behalf of Genoa itself begin, as the city-state felt too weak to start an independent campaign to recover the territory.<sup>58</sup>

Yet the former inhabitants of Genoese colonies did not relent. As sources point out, they took up the matter of recovering Caffa again in 1483. The faith in support from the King of Poland endured. Legacies sent from the authorities of Genoa to Crimea reached Poland and crossed its territory. One of the legates was the repeatedly mentioned Gianotto Lomellino, appointed *missus ad Serenissimum Regem Apoloniae pro extrahi facere nuntium cum literis legatorum nostrorum misorum in Caffa qui detentus fuit* on 8 July 1482.<sup>59</sup> The number of émigrés from Genoa who settled in Poznań included Paolo de Promontorio and his brother Stefano. The first got himself known as an active merchant with extensive trade contacts, among others, with Lublin, Vilnius, and Bydgoszcz. His Nuremberg supplier was Hans Plöd.<sup>60</sup> Both Paolo and the aforementioned Andreolo Guasco of Soldaia stayed in touch with their hometown. Guasco became the steward of the estates of the Bishop of Poznan Uriel from Górká, and sent Polish cochineal insects to Italy together with Paolo. In September 1483, the joint business caused a rupture between the partners. Paolo de Promontorio took Guasco to court for debts and unpaid goods, including velvet: black, red, brown as well as interwoven with golden thread, and

57 Grasso, "Documenti", pp. 337–338; Carusi (ed.), "Il Diario Romano di Jacopo Gherardi", pp. 65–66.

58 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 337–341 no. 96, 468; Pastor, *Storia dei papi*, p. 497; Lopez, *Storia delle colonie*, p. 356.

59 Musso, "Le ultime speranze," p. 32.

60 Jan Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska*, pp. 84–86; Ptaśnik, "Akta norymberskie do dziejów handlu z Polską w wieku XV", ed. J. Ptaśnik, *Archiwum Komisji Historycznej*, XI, (Kraków, 1903–1913), pp. 299, 303; Paweł Groth, "Handel Poznania z Zachodem w wiekach średnich," *Kronika miasta Poznania*, 5 (1927), pp. 358–359.

white and black damask.<sup>61</sup> It was Guasco who brought Niccolò de Noali from Genoa to Poland, to *plantandi vineas et omne genus agriculture*. His presence in Poland was confirmed in 1485–89. As a nobleman, Guasco himself was even appointed Lord of the Army of the Land of Kalisz, and died prior to 7 April 1489.<sup>62</sup>

Paolo de Promontorio was counted among the most active merchants in Poznań in the late 15th century. In 1483, he received a royal privilege that let him conduct free trade across the entire territory of the Kingdom of Poland. Five years later, together with his brother, he settled in Poznań.<sup>63</sup> Supplied with silks from Genoa, mostly by his father, he sold them all over Poland and Lithuania, where he reached Vilnius. He also supplied them to his partners in Nuremberg, including Ludwig Gruber (1490), Ludwig Grach and Hans Blöd (1496). In 1505, he left Poland for a year, and whether he ultimately returned to Poznań remains unknown.<sup>64</sup>

Although the efforts made in the previous years were all in vain, the Genoese Republic remained in touch with Khan Mengli Girey, losing no hope for an opportune moment to start actively recovering its estates in the Crimea. The question was for the last time undertaken by a former resident and translator from Caffa, Vincenzo de Domenico. After the fall of the Crimea, he found refuge in Poland and later moved to Venice. From there he appealed to the *Protettori di San Giorgio* about the colonies in the Black Sea on 18 July 1483. He described his journey from Poland to Chersonesus in the Crimea, where he stayed in 1482 from 6 December to the end of the month. There he learned about the talks conducted by the Genoese legates under Lodisio Fieschi. After his departure, Mengli Girey expressed surprise that the authorities of Genoa had made no decision on the matter in question and refused any further action. For the Khan was still eager to cooperate with Genoa, as he sought means to destroy Turkish supremacy, as the Tatars themselves were not satisfied with their rule.<sup>65</sup> He

61 Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska*, 84–86; Bolesław Ulanowski, (ed.), “Acta capitulorum nec non iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum”, II (1403–1530), *Monumenta Medii Aevi Historica*, XVI, (Kraków, 1902), no. 1441.

62 MRPS, I, no. 1661, 1982, 2035; Zoller, “Tra l’Italia e la Polonia”, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 5 (1908), pp. 42, 392; Saponi, “Gli Italiani in Polonia nel medioevo”, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Serie 5 (1925), pp. 142–143; ASG, *Archivio Notarile, Atti notarili di G. Castello*, filza 2, f. 130, act from 8 July 1485; Groth, “Handel Poznania”, p. 359.

63 MRPS, I, no. 1590; Saponi, “Gli Italiani”, p. 142.

64 Ptaśnik, (ed.), “Akta norymberskie,” pp. 299, 303; Ptaśnik, “Z dziejów kupiectwa krakowskiego”, *Rocznik Krakowski*, 14 (1912), pp. 34–35; Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie, *Consularia Cracoviensia*, 431, f. 364 (henceforth ANK); *ibidem*, *Cons. Crac.*, 430, f. 474; MRPS, III, no. 2357.

65 Lopez, *Storia delle colonie*, p. 356; “Wincentego de Domenico listy o Polsce pisane do senatu geneueńskiego w latach 1483–1484”, *Biblioteka Ossolińskich. Poczet Nowy*, I, (Lwów, 1862),

also mentioned that he had had an opportunity to meet residents of Caffa, while staying in Chersonesus, as they had come to the city in order to trade. Many of them wanted the Genoese to return, and if not them, then a Christian prince at the least. The city was well fortified and guarded by Turks, although their number did not exceed a thousand. Vincenzo de Domenico encouraged reconsidering an attempt to start cooperation with Mengli Girey to recover the Crimea. He also recommended his services should the authorities of Genoa be interested in them. Having received letters of credence and instruction he could go to the court of the Tatar Khan and negotiate with him. Even had he not received recommendations as an official legate, he would undertake the mission to pass the letters entrusted to the Khan, so that the evident friendship and understanding were not forgotten or lost. He also mentioned that he could go to the Crimea, even in the same year, before winter, and informed that the King of Poland at that moment remained on bad terms with Mengli Girey, as the latter had raided Ruthenian lands, which were the property of Lithuania, in August 1482, and on 1 September of the same year captured and burned Kiev. The Italian also advised that the *Protettori di San Giorgio* should return to the talks on the subject at the Polish court.<sup>66</sup>

As the preserved sources prove, the authorities of Genoa immediately answered the letter of 18 July 1483, at the same time issuing letters both to Mengli Girey and King Casimir the Jagiellon on 20 August. Copies of these documents were also sent to Poznań to Paolo de Promontorio. In the letter to Mengli Girey, the authorities of Genoa explained their long silence by the reception of information that the Khan had come to an understanding with the Turks, and pillaged Ruthenia together with them. They emphasised that they had not abandoned their desire to pursue all options of returning to Caffa, and that now they would wait for proposals and counsel from the Khan.<sup>67</sup>

Vincenzo de Domenico delivered the letter of the Genoese authorities addressed to King Casimir the Jagiellon on 27 January 1484, during a session of the Sejm in Lublin, where it was read out to the whole assembly. At the same time, he had an opportunity to present the whole issue more extensively,

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338–341; Stanisław Kutrzeba, "Handel Polski ze Wschodem w wiekach średnich", *Przegląd Polski*, 148 (1903), p. 128.

66 Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, 1, p. 355; Kolankowski, "Problem Krymu w dziejach jagiellońskich", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 49 (1935), no. 3: 15; "Wincentego de Domenico listy," pp. 344–345; Kazimierz Pułaski, *Stosunki z Mendli-Girejem chanem Tatarów Perekopskich (1469–1515). Akta i listy*, (Kraków-Warszawa: Gebethner i Spółka, 1881), pp. 24–25; Oskar Halecki, *Od unii florenckiej do unii brzeskiej*, (Lublin, Rzym, 1999), p. 149; Ochmański, "Organizacja obrony," p. 362.

67 Grasso, "Documenti," pp. 492–494 no. 122, 123.

pointing to the appropriateness of an understanding with the Tatars against Turkish aggression. He also asked the king to take a position towards the question at stake, and answer as to what forces and resources he would be able to employ to support this Christian project. He emphasised that, depending on the opinion of the Polish court, the Republic of Genoa would undertake adequate decisions and embark on a specific action. Yet no greater attention was paid to the accounts from the Genoese. He was given no exhaustive oral answer, and was only presented with a document sealed with the lesser royal seal. In the meantime, the Genoese broke the seal, and having made a copy, presented the original to Paolo de Promontorio, obliging him to remove it safely and quickly to Genoa. He himself, together with the Tatar legation that had been dismissed by the Polish court, went to the Crimea. He would immediately try to notify the authorities of Genoa about the decisions taken there.<sup>68</sup> The royal answer, drafted and signed by Chancellor Krzesław Kurozwecki, proved to consist of but a handful of vague sentences and actually gave no concrete answer on the matter in question. It can be summarised as follows: as is the case with any Christian ruler, the King of Poland calls himself a defender of the faith, and he is desirous of all possible good for Christian states, the Republic of Genoa included. Vincenzo de Domenico used the death of the king's second son, Kazimierz, in Grodno on 1 March 1484 as an excuse for the lack of a concrete answer and greater interest in the case presented, expressed also in the swift dismissal of the legate. He believed the king to be overburdened with pain and grief to the extent that he hardly attended to public matters. In fact, the time was inappropriate for examining what were hardly realistic plans, as the court at the time remained under the impact of information about the Turkish preparations for an incursion into the countries on the Danube. That required a decision whether and to what extent aid should be provided to the hospodar of Moldavia this time. The current political situation of Poland was briefly summed up by Olgierd Górka in 1933: "without the possibility of Polish military confrontation, Polish trade lost—due rather to Tatar than to Turkish actions—access to its reloading sites on the Black Sea (1475 and later 1484), and Lithuania [lost] its reign, however ineffective and interrupted, over a section of the Black Sea coast".<sup>69</sup> The last echo of the efforts made in Genoa to regain the eastern states was entrusting Cristoforo Cattaneo and Niccolò Brignole with a

68 "Wincentego de Domenico listy," pp. 345–347; letter from Vilnius on 5 April 1484; Ptaśnik, *Kultura włoska*, p. 85; Kutrzeba, "Handel Polski", 128–129; Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, p. 360.

69 "Wincentego de Domenico listy," pp. 348–350; Kolankowski, *Dzieje*, p. 360; Oswald Górka, "Dziejowa rzeczywistość a racja stanu Polski na południowym Wschodzie" *Polityka narodów*, 1 (1933), p. 17; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "La campagne ottomane de 1484: ses



mission to the eastern states *pro rebus orientalibus* on 15 October 1484. At the same time, the city also tried to secure appropriate funds *pro armamento navium rerum orientalium* and *pro classe orientalium*.<sup>70</sup>

This time, the efforts of the Genoese authorities to regain their possessions on the Black Sea were yet again to no avail, and all hopes were lost, as the Italian presence in the Crimea remained but a distant memory. Attempts at overthrowing Turkish rule in Caffa did not find sympathy among its residents either. The hope for the recovery of the Black Sea states by the Genoese was not entirely lost in Poland. A testimony to this can be found in a document of King John Albert issued in Lviv in 1497. It awarded revenue from the city's weigh house to the city's councillors, provided that Caffa, Kilia, and Białogród return to Christian rule. In such an eventuality, the authorities of Lviv would pay annually 20 Polish grzywnas [of silver] to the royal treasury.<sup>71</sup> This shows that Poland still remembered trade contacts with the Crimean cities, which used to be a source of wealth for many Polish cities. Over the years, Caffa even lost its Italian name, returning to Theodosia, the original one that meant nothing. Following later developments in history, one can acknowledge that Stefan M. Kuczyński was right when he wrote in 1939 that "as a result, in 1484, owing to oversights in Lithuanian policy in the south-east, and thanks to the lack of support from the Great Horde, King Casimir faced the loss of influence over the Crimea, an alliance of the Crimea and Muscovy against Lithuania, the prospect of Turkey making itself comfortable in the Crimea, and finally the fall of Kilia and Białogród that Turkey captured in 1484".<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, knowing the successes and military endeavours of the successor of Mehmed II, Bāyezīd II—the attack on Albania and Peloponnese, and the third incursion into the territories of Gorizia and Friuli, it can be supposed that even in the case of recovering Caffa and other Black Sea possessions, their independence might have been no more than a short-lived success.<sup>73</sup>

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préparatifs militaires et sa chronologie", *Revue des études roumaines*, 5/6 (1960), pp. 74–77; Musso, "Le ultime speranze," p. 33.

70 Musso, "Le ultime speranze," pp. 33–34.

71 Lviv, Centralnij Derzavnij Istoriceskij Archiv Ukrainy, Opis 2, Fond 52, Sprawa 1344, f. 79.

72 Łucja Charewiczowa, *Handel Lwowa z Mołdawią i Multanami w wiekach średnich*, (Lwów, 1924), p. 59; Stefan Maria Kuczyński, "Tatarzy wobec Litwy i Moskwy w drugiej połowie XV wieku", *Problemy Europy Wschodniej*, 1 (1939), p. 10.

73 Malipiero, *Annali veneti*, 1, pp. 135, 138–140; ASV, *Senato Secreti*, reg. 33, f. 11–12, 15; Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *Urbs populosissima, opulentissima, liberalissima. Mit czy rzeczywistość późnośredniowiecznej Wenecji?*, (Kraków: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1997), p. 191.

# Dynastic Conflicts, Alliances and the Ottoman Imperial Policy in the Northern Black Sea (1489–1499)

*Liviu Pilat*

The political situation of the Northern Black Sea region in the last decade of the 15th century has not been a focus of historians. In the classical approach, after the conquest of Caffa (1475), Akkerman and Kilia (1484), the Black Sea was transformed into a “Ottoman lake”, thus losing its economic and political importance, reason for which historians have focused on the previous period.<sup>1</sup> Uncontested for long time, the issue of the “Ottoman lake” was seriously questioned from the perspective of the economic and political aspects. It was noticed that the Ottoman conquest did not lead to the collapse of long-distance trade in the Black Sea. The maritime and terrestrial routes went on being used by merchants, but the major change was the disappearance of the Italian maritime powers in the region. The result was an economic integration, followed by the political integration of the Pontic territories in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> A recent approach considers the Black Sea more like a frontier than an Ottoman inner lake, taking into account the particularities of the Northern Black Sea region and the dynamic of political relations.<sup>3</sup> In this context, the Ottoman conquest of the Black Sea does not represent the final moment, but the beginning of a new phase in the Ottoman imperial policy, a stage that influenced the balance of power in the region and altering the previous alliances and adversities. Such an approach involves discarding the concepts specific to modern geopolitics, often used retrospectively in the interpretation of historical facts. This study follows the evolution of political relations in northeastern Black Sea

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- 1 Boleslaw Stachon, *Polityka Polski wobec Turcyi i akcyi antytureckiej w wieku XV do utraty Kilii i Białogrodu (1484)* (Lwów: Nakł. Tow. Naukowego, 1930); Gheorghe I. Brătianu, “La Mer Noire, plaque tournante du trafic international à la fin de Moyen Age”, *Revue Historique Sud-Est Européen*, 21 (1944), pp. 36–69; Olgierd Górka, “Zagadnienie czarnomorskie w polityce polskiego średniowiecza”, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 30 (1932–1933), 2, pp. 325–391; Marian Małowist, *Kaffa-Kolonia genueńska na Krymie i problem wschodni w latach 1453–1475*, (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii, 1947).
  - 2 Halil Inalcik, “The Question of the Closing Black Sea under the Ottomans”, *Archeion Pontou*, 35 (1979), pp. 74–110.
  - 3 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Inner Lake or Frontier? The Ottoman Black Sea in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.” *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, eds. Faruk Bilici—Ionel Căndeia—Anca Popescu, (Brăila: Istros, 2007), pp. 125–139.

in the last decade of the 15th century, especially, from the perspective of the Ottoman implication and of the reconfigured balance of power in the region.

After the 1484 campaign, Bāyezīd II abandoned the offensive in northeastern Black Sea, by adopting measures to protect Akkerman and Kilia, threatened by the military preparations of Moldavia, Poland and the Great Horde. The restoration of the fortifications and the appointing of a sanjakbey at Akkerman, followed by the transfer of Malkoçoğlu Bali Bey and of the *akingi* troops at Silistra, represented a response to the attack of the Moldavian prince and to his attempts of constituting an anti-Ottoman coalition. At the same time, the sultan was open to negotiations, given that he prepared the campaign against Egypt. Hence, in the spring of the year 1486, the Moldavian-Ottoman peace was concluded, and in 1489 the Polish-Ottoman truce. Poland had very good relations with the Ottoman Empire and in some moments, a Polish-Ottoman alliance against Hungary was under discussion. Post 1484, however, the Ottoman presence in northeastern Black Sea represented a threat for the kingdom.<sup>4</sup> After the conquest of Caffa, the ascension of the Crimean Khanate under Ottoman suzerainty<sup>5</sup> entailed a real danger for the Lithuanian territories, confirmed by the devastating Tatar expedition of 1482.<sup>6</sup> Poland sought to use the antagonism between the Great Horde and the Crimean Horde, following the Venetian dictum “set a dog on a dog”.<sup>7</sup> In the next years, Poland was more open to the North-Pontic problems and it gave the appearance of wanting to engage in a war with the Ottoman Empire. The hesitant attitude of Poland in this issue determined the dissatisfaction of the Moldavian prince, who from a vassal of the king became his archenemy. After requesting to the Pope to invalidate the oath made to the Polish king, the Moldavian voivode became a vassal of King Matthias Corvinus and he was involved in the negotiations of the alliance against Poland between Hungary and Muscovy.<sup>8</sup>

4 Liviu Pilat and Ovidiu Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during the 15th Century*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 215–230.

5 Alan W. Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), pp. 8–16.

6 Jaroslaw Pelenski, “The Sack of Kiev of 1482 in Contemporary Muscovite Chronicle Writing,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 3–4 (1979–1980), pp. 638–649.

7 Fryderyk Papée, “Imperial Expansion and the Supremacy of the Gentry, 1466–1506,” in *The Cambridge History of Poland: From the Origins to Sobieski*, ed. W.F. Reddaway, J.H. Penson and O. Halecki, (Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. 253.

8 Ilona Czamanska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku*, (Poznan: Wyd. Nauk UAM, 1996), pp. 158–166; Liviu Pilat, “The 1487 Crusade: a Turning Point in the Moldavian-Polish Relations,” *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Eastern and Central Europe*, 2 (2010), pp. 123–136.

The rulers of Moldavia and of Muscovy were both Orthodox and tied by a matrimonial alliance. The son of Ivan III, Ivan the Young, married Elena,<sup>9</sup> the daughter of Stephen the Great. Elena's mother was from the Olekovich family, an old Lithuanian noble family who claimed the Lithuanian throne. King Casimir IV had cancelled their hereditary rights to Kiev and in 1481, they plotted to assassinate the king, with support from Muscovy and Moldavia,<sup>10</sup> but the plot failed. The plotters who escaped the king's punishment sought refuge in Muscovy, where they were found in the entourage of Princess Elena,<sup>11</sup> and probably others have sought refuge in Moldavia. Ivan III plays the main role in the coalition of the enemies of the Polish king. In 1480, he allied with Mengli Girey, the Crimean khan, against the khan of the Great Horde and the Polish king and despite his subordinate position, Ivan III was in fact the dominant partner in relationship between Muscovy and Crimea.<sup>12</sup> Several years later, he offered to mediate an alliance between Mengli Girey, the king of Hungary and the Moldavian voivode. In his turn, Mengli Girey showed in 1486 his intention to mediate a treaty between Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>13</sup> The Ottoman-Tatar cooperation has been important for the rise of Muscovite power, because the Ottomans supported the alliance between Muscovy and the Crimean Khanate, to the detriment of the alliance between the Polish kingdom and the Great Horde.<sup>14</sup> The importance of the Ottoman support should not be exaggerated, because the Ottoman policy in the region was directly influenced by the context. In 1486, endangered by the alliance between Poland, the Great Horde and Moldavia, the Ottoman Empire proposed an alliance with Muscovy, but several years later, the first diplomatic contact between Muscovy and the Ottoman Empire was an epic failure.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, even in the lack of a Muscovite-Ottoman alliance, the Ottoman presence in the north of the Black Sea generated greater pressure on the Polish-Lithuanian union. There were signals that the Ottoman conquests

9 Gheorghe Bezviconi, *Contribuții la istoria relațiilor româno-ruse*, (Bucharest, 1962), 36–38.

10 Michel Hruchevsky, *L'abrégé de l'histoire de l'Ukraine*, (Paris, 1929), p. 69.

11 Nancy Shields Kollman, "The Dynastic Crisis of the 1490s Reconsidered," *Russian Review*, 45 (1986), 3, pp. 251–252.

12 Robert M. Croskey, "The Diplomatic Forms of Ivan III's Relationship with the Crimean Khan," *Slavic Review*, 43 (1984), 2, pp. 257–269.

13 *Сборник Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, (St Petersburg, 1884), pp. 41–43 and 45–51.

14 Halil Inacik, "Struggle for East-European Empire: 1400–1700. The Crimean Khanate, Ottomans, and the Rise of the Russian Empire," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 21 (1982), pp. 3–4.

15 К.В. Базилевичи, *Внешняя политика русского централизованного государства*, (Moscow: Изд-во Московского университета, 1952), pp. 422–425.

did not limit to Kilia and Akkerman. In March 1490, Jacob Buczacki, palatine of Podolia, sent to Prince Jan Olbracht a letter comprising intelligence he had obtained concerning the Ottoman plans. According to the letter, the sultan had spies in Ruthenia, Lithuania, Muscovy and Hungary, and the Turks would attack Hungary and Ruthenia during the summer. A certain Bulhac, to whom the Akkerman Pasha had shown a map with the cities of Ruthenia and Lithuania highlighted, had provided the intelligence. The Turks planned to conquer Kamenets and Lviv, cities they claimed to be practically in their hands (*Leopolis et Camenez iam sunt quasi nostra*).<sup>16</sup> The intelligence proved to be reliable, because the Ottoman offensive began during the summer. In 1490, the Ottomans attacked Oradea and the cities in Croatia,<sup>17</sup> taking advantage that the peace treaty had ended and that a favourable context emerged after the death of Mathias Corvinus, in April 1490. In addition, the Ottoman raids also concerned the territories of the Polish kingdom, but they occurred differently, because they had to consider the Polish-Ottoman peace. On 22 August 1490, Nicholas Kościeleski communicated the king's order to the official of Gdansk. According to the document, the Moldavian voivode invaded the kingdom, by occupying Kolomya and the city of Halych, and the Turks' sultan—instigated by the voivode—stroke Sniatyn with all of his power, with canons and guns, ravaging the entire region. Consequently, the king ordered the mobilization of the army for a war expedition. All those called to arms would come to Bobrik, near Lviv, on 14 September.<sup>18</sup> Several days later, a letter of the Pomeranian palatine Niclos Wolkaw addressed to the officials of Heli conveyed the same information, adding that the sultan wanted to attack Kamenets and Lviv.<sup>19</sup>

The Moldavian-Ottoman attack occurred in the summer of 1490, in the midst of the competition for the Hungarian crown between John Corvinus, the illegitimate son of Matthias, Maximilian of Habsburg, Wladislas Jagiello and Jan Olbracht. John Corvinus had the first chance, because he had access to the royal treasury, the crown custody and the Black Army; however, he did not inherit his father's political skills. Within a couple of months, he lost all his advantages and he had to settle for a secret deal, where he was offered the hereditary title of Bosnian king, should he not be elected; he actually did not receive the title eventually. An important part of the Hungarian nobility was

16 Karol Buczek, "Z dziejow kartografji ziem ruskich," *Ziemia Czerwienska*, 2 (1936), 1: p. 126.

17 Ferenc Szakály, "Phases of Turco-Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohacs (1365–1526)," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, 23 (1979), 1, p. 100.

18 Anatol Lewicki (ed.), *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti III*, (Krakow, 1894), pp. 368–369.

19 *Ibid.* 369.

against the Habsburgs, which favoured the two Jagiellons.<sup>20</sup> On 7 June 1490, in the Rakos Diet, some of the Hungarian noblemen proclaimed Jan Olbracht king of Hungary. The Polish-Ottoman truce allowed Casimir IV to intervene in the competition for the Hungarian throne. He rejected the hereditary claims of Maximilian of Habsburg and, based on his wife's dynastic right, he claimed the Hungarian throne for his son, Jan Olbracht, thus ignoring the claims made by his eldest son Wladislas Jagiello, king of Bohemia. The Polish diplomacy made efforts to have the elections acknowledged and to obtain the support of the Hungarian magnates and of the Moldavian voivode.<sup>21</sup> According to the instructions written by Philipo Bounacorssi-Calimachus,<sup>22</sup> three envoys were sent to Suceava from April to June 1490. In the first letter, written in April–May, Stephen the Great was notified regarding Jan Olbracht's intention to go to Hungary against his brother and the support provided by the Hungarian nobility, led by the Transylvanian voivode, Stephen Bathory. Jan Olbracht requested the support of the Moldavian voivode; the details of the deal would be discussed with Calimachus, as he had to cross Moldavia in his way to Istanbul.<sup>23</sup> These secret negotiations were presented like an offer he could not refuse, because Jan Olbracht expressed his hope that the voivode would not pass on such a tremendous opportunity (*non lasiate passar questa fortuna che Dio ha mandata*) and that the negotiations would reach a "*vera et solida intelligentia*".<sup>24</sup> Whereas we do not actually have Stephen the Great's answer, it seems to have been positive, which may explain the contents of the second letter. In mid-June, after the proclamation of Rakos, Jan Olbracht informed the voivode that the Black Army had joined him, which meant that he had to increase his efforts and money. Hence, he requested Stephen the Great's support, namely men and money, around 12–15,000 ducats.<sup>25</sup> This time around, his answer was not as favourable, considering the contents of the third letter. At the end of June, Jan Olbracht expressed his regret that his messengers could not find the voivode

20 András Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő (1490–1491)," *Történelmi Szemle*, 33 (1991), 1–2: pp. 1–54; Krzysztof Baczkowski, *Walka o Węgry w latach 1490–1492. Z dziejów rywalizacji habsbursko-jagiellońskiej w basenie środkowego Dunaju*, (Kraków: Nakł. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1995).

21 Marian Biskup, "Polish Diplomacy during the Angevin and Jagiellonian Era (1370–1572)," *The History of Polish Diplomacy X–XX c.*, eds. Gerard Labuda and Waldemar Michowicz, (Warsaw: Sejm Publishing Office, 2005), pp. 114–115.

22 For his career see Jozsef Garbacik, *Kallimach jako dyplomata i polityk*, (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1948).

23 Czamanska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna*, pp. 160–161.

24 Jozsef Garbacik (ed.), *Materiały do dziejów dyplomacji polskiej z lat 1486–1516*, (Wrocław-Warsaw-Kraków, 1966), pp. 13–14.

25 *Ibid.* pp. 14–15.

in order to discuss further. He sent the messengers again, because he wanted to resume the treaty in Suceava and to finalize the negotiations, by assuring the voivode of his good intentions and fraternal friendship. Furthermore, he thanked him for the news on the Tatars; as for the news on the Turks, the king believed that the voivode had been tricked and he asked him not to send such news again, because the Turks always hid their true intentions. Moreover, his take on it was that even if they were true, the voivode should keep quiet to avoid creating panic.<sup>26</sup>

The last fragment suggests that Stephen the Great informed Jan Olbracht about a possible attack of the Turks on Poland, but such news seemed highly unlikely, given the Polish-Ottoman peace concluded one year prior. Jan Olbracht's ascension on the Hungarian throne was not a favourable perspective for Moldavia, despite promises made by the future king,<sup>27</sup> but Stephen the Great had not revealed his true intentions. The voivode did not mention his plan to join the Ottomans; at that point, Jan Olbracht obviously did not know that Stephen the Great had offered to support another candidate to the Hungarian throne. Despite Hungarian gentry's hostility towards the Habsburgs, Maximilian won numerous supporters, and his campaign in Hungary was a success.<sup>28</sup> In August 1490, Maximilian reconquered Vienna and manifested as a suzerain of the Moldavian prince.<sup>29</sup> According to Jean Molinet, Stephen the Great answered favourably to the letter sent by Maximilian of Habsburg, whom he recognized as a sovereign and whom he offered to help by providing him 30,000 horsemen.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, the commitment became public, given that on 11 August 1490, Maximilian asked the Transylvanian Estates to take their oath of allegiance through the Moldavian voivode.<sup>31</sup> At that point, however, the voivode's position had become obvious because he had attacked Poland. It may be stated that Stephen the Great never had the intention to support Jan Olbracht and that he used the diplomatic negotiations to lower his vigilance and to increase the rivalry between the two Jagiellons. The attack in

26 Ibid. p. 16.

27 Șerban Papacostea, "De la Colomea la Codrii Cosminului (Poziția internațională a Moldovei la sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea)" in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în istorie*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2004), pp. 475–476.

28 E. Kovács-Péter, "Miksa magyarországi hadjárata," *Történelme Szemle*, 37 (1995), 1, pp. 35–49.

29 Ilie Minea, "Ștefan cel Mare și împăratul Maximilian I," *Cercetări istorice*, 5–7 (1929–1931), pp. 354–355.

30 Jean Molinet, *Chroniques*, vol. 4, ed. J.-A. Buchon, (Paris, 1878), pp. 120–121.

31 Friederich Finhaber, "Beiträge zur Geschichte Ungerns unter der Regierung der Könige Wladislaus II. und Ludwig II., 1490–1526," *Archiv für Kunde Österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen*, 3 (1848), pp. 410–411.

Poland synchronized with the debut of Maximilian's attack<sup>32</sup> and with the actions of Ivan III at the Lithuanian frontier,<sup>33</sup> which suggests a coordination of the military actions. In July 1490, the basis for an alliance treaty was set according to which great prince promised to support Maximilian in obtaining the crown of Hungary while Maximilian was to support Muscovy's plans to occupy the duchy of Kiev.<sup>34</sup> The treaty was to be ratified by the two sovereigns and enforced by the marriage of Maximilian with the great prince's daughter, on the condition that the bride would preserve her Greek-Orthodox faith.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the political alliance was supposed to be strengthened by a matrimonial one, as in the case of the relation with Stephen the Great. It may be assumed that the Moldavian voivode was notified concerning these negotiations, because on 4 August 1490, before Maximilian's messenger Jorg von Thorn—accompanied by the Russian envoys—left Muscovy, the great prince sent Ivan Mitcov to Moldavia.<sup>36</sup> Subsequent information shows that the leaders of Moldavia and of Muscovy had an agreement similar to the one with the Habsburgs. Several years later, in a letter to his brother, Jan Olbracht informed him that his Moldavian spies had revealed the agreement between Stephen the Great and Ivan III, according to which Stephen would have Kamenets-Podolsky, while Ivan would annex Kiev.<sup>37</sup>

The Moldavian-Ottoman attack of 1490 was interpreted as a retaliation to the Polish attempt of dethroning Stephen the Great.<sup>38</sup> Based on a document preserved in the Polish archives, Z. Spieralski identified a candidate of Moldavia throne called Peter who on 19 July 1490 at Hotin promised to the Podolian palatine Teodoryk Buczacki the payment of 1,000 złotys annually.<sup>39</sup> Upon analyzing the document in question, it may be stated that this candidate did not exist. The authors of the inventory read the date wrong; the correct

32 Attila Bárány, "La Hongrie et la guerre de Bretagne (1488–1493)," *Történeti Tanulmányok*, 22 (2014), p. 50.

33 Базилевичи, *Внешняя политика*, pp. 292–295.

34 Krzysztof Wojko, "Początki stosunków dyplomatycznych Wielkiego Księstwa Moskiewskiego z Rzeszą Niemiecką (1486–1493)," *Studia Historyczne*, 2/149 (1995) p. 155.

35 Gustave Alef, "The adoption of the Muscovite two-headed eagle: a discordant view," *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 1, pp. 5–7.

36 *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. 18, (St Petersburg, 1913), p. 273.

37 *Lietuvos Metrika (1427–1506)*, kniga nr. 5, (Vilnius, 1993), p. 129; Ludwik Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego za Jagiellonów*, 1, (Warszaw: Skł. gł. Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1930), p. 438.

38 Krzysztof Baczkowski, *Dzieje Polski późnośredniowiecznej (1370–1506)*, (Kraków: Fogra, 1999), p. 247.

39 Z. Spieralski, "Z dziejów wojen polsko-moldawskich," *Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości*, 11/2 (1965), p. 76.



one was 1446.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the support provided to a Moldavian candidate cannot be accepted as a cause or as a reaction of Poland to the Moldavian attack. Despite the military preparations, the Polish reaction was cautious and it showed the surprise provoked by the unexpected attack of the Moldavian's voivode and by the Ottomans' involvement.

The confusion was magnified by the fact that Stephen the Great denied any involvement in the attack. The Moldavian messengers heading to Muscovy were stopped and they were notified that, whereas the king did not have important information regarding the author of the attack, it is certain that the armies that invaded Podolia came from Moldavia. King decided to send to Moldavia the archbishop of Lviv and Jacob Buczacki to discuss this issue personally with the voivode.<sup>41</sup> The attack of 1490 is known mostly as "Mucha's rebellion", a peasant supported by Stephen the Great, who attacked and robbed the lands of the Polish noblemen, leading almost ten thousand rioters.<sup>42</sup> It is interesting that this character is never mentioned in the official correspondence. Only narrative sources note Mucha as a main character. The bishop of Przemyśl, Jan of Targowisko, wrote in his annals the attack of Mucha from Moldavia, but without mentioning the involvement of the Moldavian voivode and the Turks' participation.<sup>43</sup> His version is contemporary and it was written when the involvement of the Moldavian voivode in Poland was rather ambiguous. Subsequently, the situation was cleared out. The instructions of the two Polish messengers sent to Moldavia fail to mention Mucha and they ascribe to the Moldavian voivode the entire responsibility for the attack. The text states that—whereas in the beginning it was not sure whether voivode held the entire responsibility—he admitted his actions openly later. The messengers

40 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, *Zbiór dokumentów pergaminowych*, no. 7379.

41 I. Bogdan dates the document to 1490 see Ioan Bogdan (ed.), *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, vol. 2, (Bucharest, 1903) pp. 381–382. Other editors dated the document to 1491 Aleksander Jabłonowski, *Sprawy wołoskie za Jagiellonów. Akta i listy*, (Warszawa, 1878), p. 32; *Исторические связи народов СССР и Румынии в XV–начале XVIII в.*, 1, (Moscow, 1965), pp. 66–68.

42 In the soviet historiography 'Mucha's rebellion' was considered a peasants' revolt (Н.А. Мохов, *Очерки истории молдавско-русско-украинских связей*, (Kishinev, 1961), pp. 34–40; В.В. Грабовецкий, *Селянське повстання на Прикарпатті під проводом Мухи 1490–1492 роки*, (Lviv, 1979)). For other historians, Mucha was a 'Moldavian agent' and his actions were a part from a Moldavian intrigue, close related by the Moldavian-Polish territorial dispute. М.С. Грушевський, *Історія України-Руси*, 6 (Kiev, 1995), pp. 270–272.

43 *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, III, (Lwow, 1878), p. 239.

forced Stephen the Great to cease all hostile action and to pay compensation for the damage provoked or otherwise to suffer the consequences.<sup>44</sup>

The threats had no effect and the issue was far more serious than what the diplomatic Moldavian-Polish negotiations suggested. Preparations for the expedition against the Turks were a topic of discussion in 1491, too, showing that the Ottoman threat was real. Indeed, on 25 April 1491, Khan Mengli Girey wrote to Ivan III about the concentration of the Ottoman forces in Akkerman, where the sultan sent a couple thousand janissaries, and asked to gift Mesih Pasha with 40 sable furs.<sup>45</sup> Mesih Pasha is a character who expresses through his biography the fall of an empire and the rise of a new one, on the ruins of the old empire. Mesih was among the Greeks favoured by Mehmed II who played an active role in the Ottoman finances and policy.<sup>46</sup> Theodore Spadounes tells that he was a member of the Paleologus family and that he was only 10 years old when Constantinople fell. Subsequently a slave and raised at the sultan's court, the grandson of the last Byzantine emperor became a fighter for the Islam cause and a "fierce enemy of the Christians";<sup>47</sup> according to this aforementioned relative. Unlike his brother, Hass Murād Pasha, dead in the battle of Bashkent, Mesih had a long career and he experienced both victory and the bitter taste of defeat. He led the siege of Rhodes in 1480 and he almost lost his head for the failure suffered.<sup>48</sup> He returned as a vizier when Bāyezīd II began his reign and he led the negotiations regarding Djem's captivity, along with another Paleologus, Husein Pasha.<sup>49</sup> In 1484, he participated to the campaign in Moldavia, but after the campaign fell from the graces of the sultan, without knowing the reason for it. Actually, he was removed and sent in Caffa as governor. In 1489, Bāyezīd sent Prince Mehmed as Caffa governor, which determined Mesih's transfer to Akkerman.<sup>50</sup> By substituting a former "gate of Christendom", the Akkerman sanjak was a border one, with the role of promoting an active policy in the region, an opportunity for Mesih to revive his career.

44 Jablonowski, *Sprawy woloskie*, p. 33.

45 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, p. 105.

46 Halil Inalcik, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 209.

47 Theodor Spadounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, translated and edited by Donald M. Nicol, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 46 and 61.

48 Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, translated by Ralph Manheim, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 398–400.

49 Christine Isom-Verhaaren, "Constructing Ottoman Identities in the Reign of Mehmed II and Bayezid II," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 1 (2014), 1–2, pp. 120–121.

50 Halil Inalcik, "Mesih Pasha," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, VI, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 1991), pp. 1025–1026.

Throughout 1491, the Polish discovered how serious the threat at the southern border of the kingdom was, through a series of correlated actions between Ottomans, Moldavians, Tatars and Muscovites. In May 1491, in a letter to the great *knyaz* of Muscovy, Mengli Girey mentioned that the sultan would send an army of 70,000 troops, expected to arrive in June in Akkerman.<sup>51</sup> The presence of the Ottoman army ensured the security of the Crimean Khanate, threatened by the raids of the Great Horde during the previous year,<sup>52</sup> but it also represented a threat for Poland. Upon discussing Muscovy's interest in the relations between Ottomans, Tatars and Moldavians, K. Bazilevich noted the existence of a common plan for invading the Polish kingdom.<sup>53</sup> Interesting details about this plan are featured in the Annals of Jan of Targowisko. For the year 1491, the bishop wrote down that a Moldavian bandit called Andreas with the nickname Barulus addressed to the Turks' sultan Bāyezīd, at the advice of the Moldavian voivode. He claimed to be a blood relative of King Casimir and he accused the latter of taking his rightful inheritance from his parents. He asked the sultan's help to get his inheritance back and he accepted to be a subject of the sultan in return. Bāyezīd II accepted his request and gave him a couple thousand Turks to go together with him in Russia and Podolia.<sup>54</sup> The Moldavian-German chronicle completes the information on the event by adding "eyne heren auff Reussner land", whom the Moldavian prince brought from Akkerman and to whom he ordered to attack Poland.<sup>55</sup> By corroborating the information, it results that Stephen the Great and Mesih Pasha actually helped the candidate reach the sultan and provided him with military support. The Moldavian voivode initiated the action and, most probably, the details of the plan were known by the great prince of Muscovy and by the Crimean khan. It has already been mentioned that Mucha and Andreas Barulus are actually the same person;<sup>56</sup> there is no reason to doubt this identification. Both Mucha and Barulus are nicknames,<sup>57</sup> hiding the true identity of the candidate Andreas. Judging by the information available, namely the kinship with Casimir and the rights to the Lithuanian throne, he was one of the "sovereign *knyazi*", probably

51 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, p. 110.

52 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International diplomacy of European periphery (15th–18th century)*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 25.

53 Базилевичи, *Внешняя политика*, pp. 417–418.

54 *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 3, p. 239.

55 I.C. Chițimia (ed.), *Cronica lui Ștefan cel Mare*, (Bucharest, 1942), p. 51.

56 Мохов, *Очерки истории*, 38; *Исторические связи*, I, p. 295, note 33.

57 I.C. Chițimia, *Probleme de bază ale literaturii române vechi*, (Bucharest, 1972), p. 66; Koordian Bakula, "Znaczenie i pochodzenie wyrażenia przysłowiowego Kozak mucha," *Literatura Ludowa*, 4–5 (2013), pp. 47–52.

a member of the Olelkovich family, who lost the hereditary rights of Kiev few years ago. Consequently, the Moldavian-Ottoman attack of 1490 was not a mere bounty expedition, but the objective was to enthrone a *knyaz* tributary to the Porte. The plan is a contestation of the Jagiellonian dynasty in its native territory and a pretext for an ample war between Poland and the Ottoman Empire. The Moldavian-Ottoman collaboration, joined by the Crimean Tatars, was a major threat for the Polish-Lithuanian union, and the plan designed and applied by Stephen the Great and Mesih Pasha was evidence in this respect.

The Polish learned the existence of this plan only in late 1491. This aspect is suggested by the text of Jan of Targowisko. It is worth noting that Jan of Targowisko was not a mere chronicler accounting for the news learnt. The bishop of Przemyśl was involved in the political actions of the kingdom, with first-hand information. In 1486, he had been sent to Rome to persuade the Pope to proclaim the crusade in Moldavia.<sup>58</sup> Thanks to him, we know how the project of enthroning in Russia a prince tributary to the Porte unfolded. At the end of November 1491, the people of the palatine Michael Buczacki captured Andreas and sent him to Krakow where he was subsequently imprisoned. In the absence of the candidate, the Turks were satisfied with the bounty and they withdrew.<sup>59</sup> In prison, Andreas must have confessed to his involvement in the plan, which explains the information noted by the bishop of Przemyśl, who died soon after, in April 1492. After this event, the king of Poland discovered the danger threatening Lithuania and the south of Poland.

As a response to the attack of November 1491, Casimir IV summoned his men to arms again. In January 1492, the king exempted the nobleman Jan Czyeslynski from participating in the "*expeditione bellica pro defensione terrarum Russiae a Turcis, Tartaris et Valachis*".<sup>60</sup> This stands to show that in late 1491 the Polish army was ready to fight against the Ottomans, Tatars and the Moldavians. However, despite the mobilization, there is no indication of an offensive military action of the Polish army. According to Liborius Nacker, quoting an old Ruthenian noble, the king chose to make a deal with the Moldavian voivode, influenced in this respect by Queen Elisabeth, in her turn bought by Stephen the Great with gifts.<sup>61</sup> The statement reflects most likely

58 Jerzy Zathey, "Zapomniane polonicum drukowane w Rzymie w r. 1486 (Jana Targowskiego łacinska mowa do papieża Innocentego VIII)," *Medievalia. W 50 rocznice pracy naukowej Jana Dabrowskiego*. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1960), pp. 301–318.

59 *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, III, pp. 239–240.

60 Theodor Wierzbowski (ed.), *Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria*, vol. 1, (Warsaw, 1905), p. 114, no. 2185.

61 Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen and Ernst Strehle (eds.), *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 5, (Leipzig, 1874), p. 307.

the frustration that such an offence brought to the king remained unpunished. In reality, Casimir IV had enough reasons to act with caution. Considering Jan Olbracht who had entered the competition for the Hungarian crown, the conflict at the frontier with Muscovy and the perspective of the confrontation with a Moldavian-Tatar-Ottoman coalition, he preferred the diplomatic solution to a military expedition. However, there is not enough evidence to attest a diplomatic compromise; on the contrary, the information shows that conflicts went on.

In the fall of 1491, an event occurred that altered the dynamic of the actions. On 7 November 1491, Maximilian and Wladislas Jagiello reached an agreement, thus settling the treaty of Pressburg, in conditions that highly favourable to Habsburgs, which provoked the dissatisfaction of the Hungarian noblemen. Maximilian's exit from the competition determined the anti-Jagiellonian coalition to reconfigure its plans.<sup>62</sup> In December 1491, a Moldavian envoy reached Buda. The voivode of Moldavia acknowledged Wladislas Jagiello as king of Hungary and legitimate suzerain. In exchange, the king confirmed the voivode's possessions in Transylvania. After returning to Moldavia, the envoy was sent to Muscovy, where he arrived on 4 February 1492. The Moldavian envoy informed Ivan III on the negotiations between Maximilian and Wladislas Jagiello and on John Corvinus rejoining the game, with a list of Hungarian magnates supporting him.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, Ivan III transmitted to Maximilian's envoy to Muscovy the support from him and from the Moldavian voivode against "Casimir and his sons", provided only he would fight for his inheritance, the Hungarian throne.<sup>64</sup> Ivan III hoped Maximilian would rejoin the battle for the throne. For Maximilian and Stephen the Great, however, Wladislas Jagiello was accepted because he had become estranged from his father, Casimir IV. Surprisingly, it appears Bāyezīd II also preferred Wladislas Jagiello. On 27 June 1492, the messengers of Mengli Girey in Muscovy informed Ivan III on the Turks' plan for that year. According to the khan's information from the envoy of the Moldavian voivode, also confirmed by the envoy sent by Mesih Pasha, the Turks were to attack Hungary that year, while Stephen the Great sent his son along with them with an army of 5,000 horsemen. The reason of the expedition was John Corvinus' attempt to take over the Hungarian

62 Kubinyi, "Két sorsdöntő esztendő", pp. 45–46.

63 Liviu Pilat, "Solia pârcaľabului Muşat la Moscova şi implicarea Moldovei în lupta pentru coroana Ungariei," in *Clio în oglindiri de sine. Academicianului Alexandru Zub. Omagiu*, ed. Gheorghe Cliveti, (Iaşi: Univ. Al. I. Cuza, 2014), pp. 415–422.

64 *Памятники дипломатических сношений съ Имперією Римскою*, vol. 1, (St Petersburg, 1851), p. 80.

throne from Wladislas Jagiello.<sup>65</sup> Throughout the year 1492, King Wladislas consolidated his position, but the Ottoman attacks continued in Croatia and on Belgrade.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the information conveyed, the Moldavian troops did not participate in expeditions in the Hungarian kingdom alongside the Ottomans. A report of the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul, of 15 June 1492, shows that the Moldavian and the Wallachian princes—whereas both tributary to the sultan—refused to attack the Hungarian kingdom, while Stephen the Great did not allow the Tatars to cross his country.<sup>67</sup> Although there were misunderstandings and each followed their own purpose, the relations between Moldavia, the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate were very good at that moment and other sources claimed an offensive action was planned against Poland. On 10 May 1492, Mengli Girey, in his letter to Ivan III, continued to talk about the sultan's intention to attack Hungary and about the Moldavian military assistance. A Moldavian envoy came to the khan, with Stephen the Great's proposition of being "the friend's friend and the enemy's enemy", which suggested the conclusion of an alliance between Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate. Mengli Girey notified the Muscovite ruler that he began building a fortress at the Dniepr mouths, on the Lithuanian territory, with money borrowed from the Ottomans. He asked to the great *knyaz* to send in the summer 1,000 troops to the steppe, because the khan wanted to conquer Kiev, thus even considering that Vilna and Krakow could be conquered.<sup>68</sup> Kiev was also a target for Ivan III, but also for the Ottomans. A map from this period, stored at the Topkapı Palace, shows the attack plan that included the participation of the Ottoman fleet on the Dniepr course.<sup>69</sup> The existence of this plan and the support for a Russian ruler is not a mere coincidence.

On 7 June 1492, King Casimir IV died at Grodno. According to his wish, Jan Olbracht was elected as king of Poland and Alexander as grand duke of Lithuania. The great prince Simon Olelkovich, who arrived at Vilna accompanied by 500 horsemen, also claimed the Lithuanian throne,<sup>70</sup> but the

65 *Сборник Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, pp. 149 and 151.

66 Szakály, "Phases of Turco-Hungarian Warfare," p. 101.

67 Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. 8, (Bucharest, 1894), p. 28.

68 *Сборник Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, pp. 151–153; Базилевичи, *Внешняя политика*, p. 303.

69 Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, "Stara turecka mapa Ukrainy z planem wyssadzenia dniesprańskich prochów i ataku floty tureckiej na Kijów," *Studia Historyczne*, 44 (2001), 1, pp. 3–23.

70 В.А. Воронин, "Князя Олельковичи—претенденты на власть в Великом Княжестве Литовском," *Исследования по истории Восточной Европы*, 9 (2016), p. 115.

Lithuanian noblemen decided to respect the last wish of Casimir IV. The Polish-Lithuanian union survived only at symbolical level, through the Polish king's title of "supremus dux Lithuaniae",<sup>71</sup> but the two brothers inherited the issues his father had failed to solve, the most threatened of which was Lithuania. On 27 June 1492, grand duke Alexander wrote to Mengli Girey, asking him to keep the peace between Lithuania and the Crimean Khanate, as during the reign of his father, Hacı Girey. The Lithuanian ruler was ready to give the khan the fortress situated at the Dniepr mouth, should peace be preserved.<sup>72</sup> An envoy was also sent to Moldavia; Alexander asked the voivode to follow the old treaties between Lithuania and Moldavia and to respect the Lithuanian-Moldavian border.<sup>73</sup> The greatest danger came from Muscovy, where Ivan III was ready to begin the war against Lithuania and to take over the title of grand duke of the entire Russia, which stated implicitly the supremacy of the Rurik dynasty over the Jagiellonian one.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, seduced by the perspective of an anti-Ottoman alliance with Hungary and the Habsburgs, Jan Olbracht refused to renew the Polish-Ottoman truce.<sup>75</sup>

In August 1492, Ivan III sent envoys to the Crimean khan and to the Moldavian voivode.<sup>76</sup> The Muscovite envoy had the task of persuading Mengli Girey to stop building the city of Tjahyn (Tavan) and to attack Lithuania as soon as possible.<sup>77</sup> The message for Stephen the Great was not preserved, but it must have been a similar piece of advice. This is suggested by the interest shown by Ivan III for the Moldavian-Tatar alliance, concluded during the summer of 1492<sup>78</sup> and by the military actions of Moldavia against Lithuania. In September 1492, Mengli Girey wrote to Ivan III concerning the alliance concluded with Stephen the Great and the support that the sultan was ready to offer.<sup>79</sup> In 1492–1493, several Ottoman, Tatar and Moldavian incursions were organized in the Polish-Lithuanian territories, but they are minor compared to the big offensive action planned. Despite the diplomatic negotiations, they

71 Baczkowski, *Dzieje Polski*, p. 277.

72 Kazimierz Pulaski (ed.), *Stosunki z Mendli-Girejem chanem tatarow Perekopskich (1469–1515). Akta i listy*, (Krakow-Warszawa, 1881), pp. 221–223.

73 Jablonowski, *Sprawy woloskie*, p. 60.

74 Robert Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania Union*, 1, (Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 285.

75 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations. An annotated edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents (15th–18th centuries)*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2000), 110.

76 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, p. 156.

77 Базилиевичи, *Внешняя политика*, pp. 303–304.

78 Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria-Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare*, (Putna: Sf. Mănăstire Putna, 2005), pp. 287–289.

79 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, p. 168.

were mere bounty expeditions, which the authors could deny, should the situation impose it. In the winter of 1492–1493, Tatars ravaged the areas around the cities of Chernigov and Putivl.<sup>80</sup> A report of 1493 mentions two Moldavian attacks in Podolia, led by the son of Stephen the Great and a battle near Lviv. Furthermore, the Turks attacked Podolia twice, and the voivode let them pass through his country.<sup>81</sup> A very interesting aspect is that the Moldavians and the Ottomans attacked separately; those were synchronized actions, not a coalition of the troops. Though small, regular attacks had an important impact in the southern territories of the Polish kingdom. The damage brought to fortifications affected the defensive system of the Polish kingdom, thus preparing the annexation of Pokutia by Moldavia.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, raids had a major economic impact. The regular pillaging of Russia and Podolia devastated the settlements, and many noblemen were ruined.<sup>83</sup> Poland and Lithuania retaliated to these actions, using more than diplomatic ways. In 1493, the Lithuanian army led by Bogdan Gliniski and Özdemir, Mengli Girey's brother who was in Lithuania's service, attacked and destroyed the Tjahyn fortress.<sup>84</sup> During the expedition, the Muscovite envoy sent to Moldavia had been captured in the previous year and some of his companions were killed. The Moldavian messengers who went to Muscovy were forced to return home.<sup>85</sup>

In his turn, Mengli Girey informed Ivan III that he was ready to rise against Lithuania, along with the Ottomans and the Moldavians. The good news was that the sultan had sent against the king a big army from Akkerman, led by Mesih Pasha, with whom the khan had discussed the attack plan.<sup>86</sup> In 1494, the Tatars attacked Lithuania and they defeated the Lithuanian army at Višňovec, in Volhynia.<sup>87</sup> Mengli Girey began to build a new city on the Dniepr, later known as Djankerman (Oćakov).<sup>88</sup> In the same year, the Moldavians conquered the

80 Egidijus Banionis, "Diplomatic Relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Duchy of Moldavia (1492–1501)", *Analele Putnei*, VI (2010), 2, p. 12.

81 *Исторические связи*, vol. 1, pp. 70–71.

82 Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps*, p. 277; Alexandru V. Boldur, *Ștefan cel Mare voievod al Moldovei (1457–1504)*. *Studiu de istorie socială și politică*, (Madrid: Carpații, 1970), p. 255.

83 Liviu Câmpeanu, "Ein Rewsze mit namen Mucha ... Din istoria relațiilor moldo-polone în 1486/1488–1491," *Analele Putnei*, XI (2015), 2, p. 27.

84 Fryderyk Papée, *Polska i Litwa na przełomie wieków średnich*, vol. 1, (Krakow, 1904), p. 232; Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate*, p. 26.

85 *Исторические связи*, vol. 1, pp. 69–70.

86 *Сборник Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, 41, pp. 183 and 187–188.

87 *Scriptores rerum polonicarum*, II, (Krakow, 1874), p. 21.

88 Kolankowski, *Dzieje Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego*, pp. 418–420; Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate*, p. 26.



Braclaw fortress, on the Bug River, then making people move to Moldavia.<sup>89</sup> There is no information on an Ottoman raid led by Mesih Pasha; the sanjak-bey of Akkerman must have refrained from any action that year. This may be explained by the Polish-Ottoman peace negotiations in early 1494. Though in November 1493, the king of Poland still hoped for an alliance with Hungary and Holy Empire against the Turks and for assistance in the problems with the Tatars, the Moldavians and the Muscovites,<sup>90</sup> eventually, Jan Olbracht sent his envoy to Istanbul and on 6 April 1494 Bāyezīd II issued an *ahid-name*, which guaranteed the peace between the Ottoman Empire, Poland and Lithuania.<sup>91</sup> The confirmation act issued by the king of Poland focused on the liberation of prisoners and, on 8 July 1494, a Polish envoy was sent to Istanbul to request the release of people from the Polish-Lithuanian territories captured by the Ottomans in the previous years.<sup>92</sup> The Polish-Ottoman truce produced effects rapidly. On 4 June 1494, Mengli Girey wrote to Ivan III that Bāyezīd II accepted the conclusion of the truce, receiving 14,000 zlotys from the Poles. The sultan ordered the Moldavian voivode to live in peace with the Polish and to the khan to withdraw his Cossacks from Akkerman. The khan had all the freedom to continue the war with Lithuania, but he no longer benefited from Ottoman support.<sup>93</sup>

In his turn, Ivan III concluded the peace with Lithuania, which had benefits mostly for Muscovy, settled by a matrimonial alliance, the marriage between Alexander Jagiello and Elena Ivanovna.<sup>94</sup> After the conclusion of the peace, Ivan III sought to mediate the peace between his son-in-law, the grand duke of Lithuania and his allies, the Crimean khan and the Moldavian voivode. In February 1495, the Muscovite messengers requested free passage to the grand duke of Lithuania, to go to Mengli Girey and to Stephen the Great.<sup>95</sup> Alexander Jagiello allowed the passage of the envoys, but he was still cautious regarding an agreement, as he remembered the damage caused in the previous year.<sup>96</sup> On 19 May 1496, Ivan III transmitted to his son-in-law that Mengli Girey and Stephen the Great were ready to make peace with Lithuania,<sup>97</sup> but Alexander

89 Boldur, *Stefan cel Mare*, pp. 262–264.

90 Z.L. Radziminski and B. Gorczak (eds.), *Archivum ksiązat Lubartowiczów Sangusków w Sławucie*, II, (Lwów, 1888), p. 248.

91 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Relations*, pp. 110–111 and 202–204.

92 Lewicki, *Codex epistolaris III*, pp. 420–422.

93 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, pp. 209–210.

94 Базилевици, *Внешняя политика*, pp. 329–337.

95 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 35, (St Petersburg, 1884), pp. 174–175.

96 *Исторические связи*, vol. 1, pp. 71–72.

97 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 35, pp. 220–222.

Jagiello answered evasively: he requested compensation for the damage incurred first.<sup>98</sup> Despite his reticence, in 1496, the grand duke of Lithuania initiated diplomatic negotiations with Mengli Girey<sup>99</sup> and with Stephen the Great,<sup>100</sup> but the political situation in the region remained tensed.

In April 1494, the Congress of Levoča took place, which the Jagiellonian brothers attended, except for Alexander. The discussions were classified, but the topics discussed were “*super regnorum unione, super bellos in Thurcas et extirpatione Valachi*”.<sup>101</sup> The position of Wladislas Jagiello consolidated after the congress, because Jan Olbracht accepted to sign a secret treaty against the rebel Hungarian magnates, thus guaranteeing mutual help between Poland and Hungary. In exchange, Jan Olbracht did not get permission to replace the Moldavian voivode with Sigismund Jagiello or the support of Hungary for the war with the Turks. The Polish king got approval only for a campaign to conquer Kilia and Akkerman, unfolded along with Stephen the Great.<sup>102</sup> In June 1494, chancellor Krzeslaw of Kurozwek was sent to discuss the king’s plan and the collaboration with the Moldavian voivode, who—according to sources—was ready to participate to the capture of Akkerman and Kilia, on certain conditions.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that in 1494 Moldavians attacked Braclaw says a lot about the serious character of these discussions.

On the other hand, Jan Olbracht’s plan was well received by the grand duke of Lithuania. At the end of 1495, Alexander Jagiello wrote to his brother about the need to chase the Ottomans of Kilia and Akkerman; he thought that, as long as the city was dominated by the Turks, the security of the southern regions of Poland and Lithuania would be in danger.<sup>104</sup> In November 1496, Jan Olbracht and Alexander Jagiello met in Parczew to discuss these aspects.<sup>105</sup>

98 *Lietuvos Metrika*, kniga no. 5, p. 113.

99 Pulaski, *Stosunki z Mendli-Girejem*, pp. 229–235.

100 Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ștefan cel Mare*, 11, pp. 391–396; Banionis, “Diplomatic Relations”, p. 15.

101 *Scriptores rerum Polonicarum*, vol. 2, p. 259.

102 Biskup, “Polish Diplomacy,” p. 125. Initially, it was considered that the Moldavian issue was not discussed at Levoča (Finkel, pp. 320–322). Subsequently, the discovery of a new narrative source imposed a reassessment of the interpretation (Olgierd Górká, “Nieznany żywot Bajezida II źródłem dla wyprawy czarnomorskiej i najazdów turków za Jana Olbrachta,” *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 52 (1938), pp. 399–400). Eventually, the discovery of the letter written by Wladislas Jagiello in the fall of 1497, comprising a clear reference to the discussions of Levoča (Garbacik, *Materiały*, pp. 26–30), eliminated any doubt.

103 *Scriptores rerum Polonicarum*, 11, p. 22; Fryderyk Papée, *Jan Olbracht*, (Krakow, 1936), pp. 72–73; Gh. Duzinchevici, “Războiul moldo-polon din anul 1497. Critica izvoarelor,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 8 (1975), pp. 26–27.

104 Banionis, “Diplomatic Relations,” p. 16; Lewicki, *Codex epistolaris III*, 436–437.

105 Papée, *Jan Olbracht*, 126.

The *Bychowiec chronicle* mentions that sometime around Christmas the two had a secret understanding: for Alexander to rise against Moldavia through Braclaw towards Soroca, and for Jan Olbracht to choose another path.<sup>106</sup> In late 1496, a Polish messenger was sent to Istanbul, to demand the sultan to chase the Crimean Tatars of Akkerman and to conclude an honourable peace, but Bāyezīd II rejected these requests.<sup>107</sup> On 13 June 1497, Lithuanian envoys were in Muscovy to demand the help of Ivan III. According to them, the envoy sent by Jan Olbracht to Istanbul came with news regarding the Ottoman offensive. A numerous Ottoman army was at the Danube heading to Akkerman, and the Tatars of Crimea were ready to join them. The Muscovites asked whether the Moldavian voivode would go against the Turks or alongside them, because they knew to be in good relations. To this question, the Lithuanian envoy answered that he hoped the Moldavian voivode would choose to be alongside Alexander Jagiello and Jan Olbracht.<sup>108</sup> It is interesting that the Muscovites and the Lithuanians expressed their doubts on the participation of the Moldavian voivode against the Ottomans, precisely while Jan Olbracht was heading to Lviv.

Jan Olbracht's campaign to Moldavia has been thoroughly analyzed<sup>109</sup> hence, I will not insist on the details here. Historical approaches have considered Jan Olbracht's campaign either as an anti-Ottoman action that degenerated into an attack against Moldavia or into an action against Moldavia from the very beginning, using the anti-Ottoman war just as a pretext. The controversy is still an open matter,<sup>110</sup> though it has been noted that the contradicting versions regarding the campaign of 1497 reflect the interested positions of the

106 *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. 17, (St Petersburg, 1907), 554.

107 Biskup, "Polish Diplomacy," pp. 125–126; Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Relations*, p. III.

108 *Сборник Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, 35, p. 233.

109 Anatol Lewicki, "Król Jan Olbracht o klesce bukovinskiej r. 1497," *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 7 (1893), pp. 1–15 and 455–456; Eduard Fisher, "Kozmin, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des polnisch-moldavischen Conflictes im Jahre 1497," *Jahrbuch des Bukovinaer Landesmuseumus*, 10 (1902), p. 37; Fryderyk Papée, "Zagadnienie Olbrachtowej wyprawy z r. 1497," *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 47 (1933), pp. 17–30; Górka, "Nieznany żywot Bajezida", pp. 386–427; Duzinchevici, "Războiul moldo-polon", pp. 9–61; Zdzisław Spieralski, *Awantury moldawskie*, (Warsawa, 1967); C. Rezachevici and Dan Căpățână, "Campania lui Ștefan cel Mare din 1497 împotriva lui Ioan Albert," in *File de istorie militară a poporului român*, III, (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 38–52; Tadeusz Grabarczyk, "The Polish Court Banner in the Moldavian Expedition in 1497," *Fasciculi Archaeologiae Historicae*, 30 (2017), pp. 29–34.

110 Janusz Smolucha, "Kilka uwag na temat wyprawy czarnomorskiej Jana Olbrachta w 1497," *Studia Historyczne*, 40 (1997), pp. 413–421.

factors involved in the conflict both sides manipulated and distorted realities.<sup>111</sup> Based on the aforementioned aspects, it may be stated that Jan Olbracht and Stephen the Great were both dishonest and that they never acted as allies, because their purpose was different. The opposition of the Hungarian king concerning an action against Moldavia only left Jan Olbracht with the solution of an anti-Ottoman campaign. A campaign to reconquer Akkerman was good bait for the Moldavian voivode, forced to be in conflict with the sultan. However, Stephen the Great had too much political experience to be tricked that easily. Thus, in his turn, he set a trap to the Polish king, to provoke an Ottoman-Polish conflict. The position of the two became clear in mid-August, when the king ordered the arrest of the two Moldavian envoys, who came to communicate the voivode's interdiction of letting the Polish army enter Moldavia. Whereas in the Polish camp the news they would rise against the Moldavian voivode led to consternation and people from the king's entourage asked him to reconsider his position,<sup>112</sup> for other contemporaries this was far from a surprise.

Ottoman sources mention that the Moldavian voivode set a trap to the Polish king, by letting him believe he would rise against the Ottomans, but at the same time providing intelligence to the sultan and requesting Ottoman military support.<sup>113</sup> Contemporary with the events, Ibn-Kemal states that the king's objective was to eliminate the Moldavian voivode, while Stephen the Great informed the sultan on Jan Olbracht's intentions. Consequently, Bāyezīd II ordered Yakub Pasha, the Rumelian governor, to concentrate the Ottoman troops at Plovdiv. To Mesih Pasha, governor in the Akkerman and Kilia areas, the sultan ordered to be ready and to go with the army, as soon as the Moldavian voivode would request it.<sup>114</sup> By corroborating such information with that on the concentration of the Ottoman forces at the Danube, conveyed the Lithuanian messengers in Muscovy in June 1497, it would result that the Moldavian-Ottoman discussions took place in the spring, way before Jan Olbracht revealed his intention to attack Moldavia.

Furthermore, pursuant to the Moldavian-Tatar alliance of 1492, Stephen the Great asked for military support from Mengli Girey. The message conveyed by the envoy of the khan to Muscovy in August 1498 provides important details

111 Șerban Papacostea, *Evul Mediu românesc. Realități politice și curente spirituale*, (București: Corint, 2001), p. 266; Pilat and Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat*, pp. 243–256.

112 *Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen in XV Jahrhundert*, III, ed. E. Weise, (Marburg, 1966), 164–165; *Scriptores rerum Polonicarum*, vol. 2, pp. 24–25.

113 Mihai Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmed, (eds.), *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române*, vol. 1, (București, 1966), pp. 137–138, 329, 465.

114 Nagy Pienaru, "Izvoare otomane privind Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare," *Analele Putnei*, 5 (2009), 1, pp. 31–32.

on this matter, including chronological aspects. The khan's reaction made Stephen the Great discontent; hence, Mengli Girey sought to motivate his actions. According to the account, the Moldavian voivode sent an envoy to the khan bearing the message that he would be attacked by the Polish king and the grand duke of Lithuania. The khan mobilized his army at Djankerman, but the outbreak of a plague forced him to go away, leaving behind his son, Mehemed Girey, along with 1,000 troops. Subsequently, he was attacked by the prince Constantine of Ostrog. Consequently, the Tatars failed to support Moldavia. Before withdrawing from Djankerman, the khan received a new envoy through whom the voivode let him know that the Polish king and the grand duke of Lithuania would not attack him during the summer, but during the winter.<sup>115</sup> Regardless of whether the khan's account is reliable or not, the last detail is important because it shows that the Moldavian-Tatar diplomatic discussions took place in the spring of 1497, probably at the same time as the Moldavian-Ottoman discussions. Finally, on 19 August 1497, the messengers of Ivan III warned Alexander Jagiello that the military action would not target the Turks, but the Moldavian voivode. The great duke reminded the Lithuanian prince that Stephen the Great was his relative and that the relationship between Moldavia and Muscovy was older and that it prevailed over the Muscovite-Lithuanian relationship.<sup>116</sup>

In their turn, the Lithuanian noblemen were cautious regarding an expedition against Moldavia and they asked the grand duke to share with them the contents of the secret discussions at Parczew. Alexander's refusal was followed by the Lithuanian noblemen's refusal of going farther than Braclaw.<sup>117</sup> Lithuania's interests were not similar to Poland's, while the grand duke could not decide without the agreement of the Lithuanian council. Consequently, Alexander organized in 1497 an expedition against the Tatars, and only Lithuanian volunteers were sent to help his brother.<sup>118</sup> The Lithuanian cavalry corps sent by Alexander arrived in Moldavia after the Battle of Kuzmin. Nonetheless, it represented an important help for the Polish army, (demoralized and continuously attacked by the Moldavian, Ottoman and Wallachian troops).<sup>119</sup>

Whereas from a military perspective, the defeat at Kuzmin was not a disaster for the Polish army, the campaign of King Jan Olbracht in 1497 was an epic

115 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 41, p. 256.

116 *Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества*, vol. 35, pp. 237–238.

117 Boldur, *Ștefan cel Mare*, p. 278.

118 Banionis, "Diplomatic Relations", pp. 17–18.

119 *Scriptores rerum Polonicarum*, vol. 2, p. 32; Papée, *Jan Olbracht*, p. 154; Duzinchevici, "Războiul moldo-polon", p. 56.

failure. The king missed all of his objectives, started a war with the Ottoman Empire and unified against him the countries of the region, within an even broader coalition than the anti-Jagiellonian alliance of 1490–1491. The Polish diplomacy failed to ensure international support to the king's campaign, and subsequently they started a campaign blaming the Moldavian voivode and placing the entire responsibility on him.<sup>120</sup> On the other side, Stephen the Great's prestige grew; he became a strong prince, respected by both Christians and Muslims. Wladislas Jagiello stated that the peace between Hungary and Poland was in the hands of the Moldavian voivode,<sup>121</sup> while Maximilian of Habsburg congratulated the voivode for his victory on the Poles.<sup>122</sup> The news of the Moldavian victory was disseminated by the Porte in the Islamic world,<sup>123</sup> and the sultan honoured *Istifan-bey* with gifts, clothing items and golden *üsküf*.<sup>124</sup> His collaborator and the exponent of the Ottoman policy in north-eastern Black Sea benefited in his turn from the victory. For Mesih Pasha, it was a big decision to return to the Empire's capital and to receive an important dignity. Mesih sent 29 flags and Polish noblemen captures and re-entered the graces of the sultan, being appointed vizier.<sup>125</sup>

However, the war had not ended yet, and it went on to show the limits of the Moldo-Ottoman collaboration. In 1498, the sultan ordered Malkoçoglu Bali Bey,<sup>126</sup> sanjakbey of Silistra, to organize an *akin* in the Polish kingdom. In May 1498, the *akingi* troops penetrated the territory of the kingdom, devastating the region around Lviv. The Ottoman expedition synchronized with the attack of the Tatars, and their combined effect was ravaging.<sup>127</sup> The voivode of Moldavia did not participate in this expedition.<sup>128</sup> After the retreat of Malkoçoğlu, the Moldavian armies arrived to Poland at the end of June and they pillaged the area around Lviv, Halici and in Podolia, destroying several

120 Biskup, "Polish Diplomacy", pp. 126–127.

121 Garbacik, *Materiale*, pp. 42–43.

122 Ioan-Aurel Pop and Alexandru Simon, "Moldova și celălalt imperiu: preliminariile și consecințele conspirației lui Maximilian I de Habsburg și Ștefan cel Mare (1497)", *Vocația istoriei. Prinos profesorului Șerban Papacostea*, eds. Ovidiu Cristea and Gheorghe Lazăr, (Brăila: Istros, 2008), p. 391.

123 Pienaru, "Izvoare otomane", p. 35.

124 *Cronici turcești*, vol. 1, p. 331.

125 Inalcik, "Mesih Pasha", p. 1025.

126 G. Leiser, "Malkoç-oghullari", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, XI Supplement, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 578.

127 Z. Spieralski, "Po klesce Bukowinskiej 1497 roku. Pierwsze najazdy Turków na Polskę", *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, IX (1963), 1, pp. 45–58.

128 Ștefan S. Gorovei, "Mai 1498: Ștefan cel Mare și Polonia," *Analele Putnei*, 10 (2014), 2, pp. 401–414.

fortresses.<sup>129</sup> Under the pressure of repeated Ottoman, Tatar and Moldavian raids, Jan Olbracht began the peace negotiations. In July 1498, the Polish-Hungarian negotiations began for an anti-Ottoman alliance between Hungary, Poland and Moldavia. In April 1499, the treaties were signed. Poland gave up the suzerainty claims over Moldavia, and the voivode became an ally, not a vassal of the king.<sup>130</sup>

Despite this alliance, Poland needed a truce with the Ottoman Empire; the negotiations with the sultan and his son, the governor of Caffa, were mentioned in the correspondence between the king and the grand duke of Lithuania.<sup>131</sup> The beginning of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Venice relaxed partially the situation in the region of the Black Sea. On 4 September 1499, the general captain for Russia's defence informed the king that the Ottoman forces were concentrated in the Korfu Island, and in the area of Kilia and Akkerman remained only 8,000 troops. The Tatars sent an envoy there and together they planned a new attack on the Polish territories.<sup>132</sup> In 1499, a Polish messenger was sent to Istanbul and after long negotiations, on 19 July 1501, Bāyezīd II issued an *'ahd-name*, which guaranteed the Ottoman-Polish peace.<sup>133</sup> However, the situation in the region did not calm down. The new war between Muscovy and Lithuania, new Tatar incursions in Crimea and the annexation of Pokutia by Moldavia made the Jagiellonian States remain in a continuous defence, but these aspects exceed the chronological framework here.

In 1490, the Jagiellonian dynasty was profiled as a redoubtable force in Central and Eastern Europe, leading Poland, Lithuania, Bohemia and claiming the crown of Hungary. For the States in the region, the Jagiellons' ascension represented a greater threat than the Ottoman expansion, which explains the anti-Jagiellonian coalition. Ten years later, the situation changed dramatically. State interests prevailed over dynastic interests, and dynastic policy became a defensive instrument, not for claiming hegemony. An example is the marriage between Alexander Jagiello and the daughter of Ivan III and the marriage proposed between Bogdan, the son of Stephen the Great, and Elisabeth Jagiello. The fight against the Ottomans was the main common objective of the Jagiello brothers, but the divergences between States played an important role in this matter, too. For Poland, the control over Moldavia was a priority, while Lithuania was only interested in eliminating the attack bases of

129 P.P. Panaitescu (ed.), *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI*, (Bucharest, 1959), pp. 12–13, 22.

130 Biskup, "Polish Diplomacy," p. 127.

131 *Lietuvos Metrika*, kniga nr. 5, p. 128.

132 Anatol Lewicki (ed.), *Listy i akta Piotra Myskowskiego*, (Krakow, 1898), p. 52.

133 Kołodziejczyk, *The Ottoman-Polish Relations*, pp. 111–112 and 208–209.

Djankerman, Akkerman and Kilia. For Hungary, it was crucial to defend the Danube, while a Polish control over Moldavia was unacceptable. On the other side, the Ottoman Empire consolidated its position in the north of the Black Sea after the conquest of Kilia and Akkerman, thus modifying radically the balance of power: old enemies became allies and former allies became adversaries. The Ottoman policy in the region was based on the support granted to tributary States, the Crimean Khanate and Moldavia, not on important military actions. Stephen the Great and Mengli Girey are the main political actors, supported by Mesih Pasha, sanjakkbey of Akkerman. The plan of a tributary Russia failed, but the defeat of Poland and the disappearance of the Great Horde may be considered—despite the minor involvement—important successes of the Ottoman imperial policy.



# From Świerczowski to Wallachian Expedition of Jan Zamoyski: Rise of the Cossack Factor in Polish-Ottoman Relations (1574–1600)

Dariusz Milewski

The Polish-Ottoman relationships during the era of the Jagiellonian dynasty were not only peaceful but could also be described as friendly. There were, of course, mutual irritations, or even tragic events like death of King Władysław III at the battle of Varna in 1444, or the Turkish invasion of Poland after the unsuccessful expedition of John I Albert to Moldavia (1497–1498). The first defeat, however, resulted from a Turkish-Hungarian war (Polish king was also the sovereign of Hungary at that time), while the campaign in the late 90s of the 15th century did not turn into a large-scale war.<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Sigismund I (1506–1548) the Polish-Ottoman relationships normalized, which was not prevented even by the death of Polish king's nephew, Hungarian King Louis II. Jagiello, at the battle of Mohács (1526). In 1533 not only did Poland conclude a peace treaty with the Ottomans—for an indefinite period of time, which was a peculiar phenomenon in Porte's activity, but also undertook an informal cooperation in Hungary, which was directed against the House of Habsburg.<sup>2</sup>

Moldavia still remained the flashpoint in the Polish-Ottoman relationships, as both sides claimed rights to it. Suleyman the Magnificent tamed

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1 See Edward Potkowski, *Warna 1444*, (Warsaw: Bellona, 1990); Ilona Czamańska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku*, (Poznań 1996), 167–184; Liviu Pilat, "The 1487 crusade: a turning point in the Moldavian-Polish relations," *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe*, 2 (2010), pp. 123–136; Marek Plewczyński, *Wojny Jagiellonów z wschodnimi i południowymi sąsiadami Królestwa Polskiego w XV wieku*, (Siedlce 2002), pp. 131–149, 153–161.

2 The 'ahd-name sent by Suleyman I to King Sigismund I, Istanbul, 18–26 January 1533, in: Dariusz Kołodziejczyk *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century). An Annotated Edition of Ahdnames and Other Documents*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 230–231, no. 13 and the royal confirmation of the treaty, 1 May 1533, 232–233, no. 14 (review: pp. 117–119). On the peace treaty and Polish-Ottoman cooperation discusses Andrzej Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-tureckie w latach 1500–1572 w kontekście międzynarodowym*, (Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 2005), pp. 93–167. See also: Ilona Czamańska, "Poland and Turkey in the 1st Half of the 16th Century—Turning Points." in *Fight Against the Turk in Central-Europe in the First Half of the 16th Century*, ed. István Zombori, (Budapest: METEM, 2004), pp. 91–101.

this country in 1538, the Poles, however, tried to regain their influence there.<sup>3</sup> Mikołaj Sieniawski, the Field Hetman, intervened there in 1551 and for the second time in 1552, with successful results. Alexander Lăpușneanu was placed on the throne in Iassy and owed feudal allegiance to King Sigismund August on 5 September 1552, which was renewed and approved by the king a year later.<sup>4</sup> Despite the Polish king's concerns, there was no conflict with the Ottomans and Alexander's reign was approved by the Sultan. He remained Porte's vassal and was associated with Poland at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, his reign was roughly interrupted by insubordinate governor of Sieradz province, Albert Łaski, who, on his own initiative, placed John Jacob Basilikos Heraklides on the Moldavian throne in 1561. He acted in the House of Habsburg interest, nevertheless, neither Poland nor Ottomans allowed themselves to be provoked. Sigismund August refused to accept the feudal allegiance from Heraklides, and even though he was approved by Suleyman, the latter lost the throne as well as his life in 1563.<sup>6</sup> Alexander regained his power in Moldavia in 1564 and, even though he did not favour the Poles as much as before, his son and successor, Bogdan IV (1568–1572), restored close relations with Poland by owing feudal allegiance to Sigismund August in 1569.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the reign of a new prince did not normalize the situation lastingly. Bogdan was dethroned by the Ottomans no later than in 1572—it is important to note that one of the objections was maintaining too close relations with Poland.<sup>8</sup> Truly decisive factor were the machinations of a certain

3 The legal status of Moldavia after 1538 discusses Viorel Panaite, "The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. Gabor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 21–32.

4 Alexander Lăpușneanu to King Sigismund August, Hârlău, 22 June 1553, Ilie Corfus (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, 1, (București: Academiei 1979), pp. 166–172, no. 84; the confirmation of the treaty by Sigismund August, Kraków, 19 August 1553, *ibidem*, 183–186, no. 87. About Lăpușneanu see: Demir Dagnev, Eduard Baidaus and Ghenadie Bodeanu, *Domnii Țării Moldovei: studii*, (Chișinău: Civitas 2005), pp. 115–119.

5 See Dariusz Milewski, "Mołdawia w orbicie wpływów polskich (1552–1572)," in *Spotkania polsko-mołdawskie. Księga poświęcona pamięci Profesora Janusza Solaka*, ed. M. Kosienkowski, (Lublin: Episteme, 2013), pp. 44–46.

6 Iona Czamańska, "Jakub Basilikos Heraklides—droga wyzwolenia Grecji?," *Balkanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia*, 9/10 (1999), pp. 133–141; Ryszard Zieliński and Roman Żelewski, *Olbracht Łaski. Od Kieźmarku do Londynu*, (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1982), pp. 22–26.

7 Bogdan to King Sigismund August, Jassy, 2 October 1569, Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki (ed.), *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*, supplement 2, part 1, (Bucharest 1893), pp. 263–265.

8 However, the Polish-Ottoman peace treaty was renewed in 1568 and Ottomans wanted the king to go with them against Moscow—see the *'ahd-name* sent by Selim II to Sigismund

John (later known as John the Brave), who promised the Ottomans to increase the forced tribute from Moldavia in exchange for ceding the power over this country to him. With help of the Turks, he entered Moldavia and assumed power as Moldavian ruler (1572–1574).<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Poles tried to save their favourite by taking diplomatic action in Istanbul as well as sending the army to Moldavia. However, the military expedition led by Nicholas Mielecki, the voivode of Podolia, in April 1572 resulted in failure.<sup>10</sup> The Polish-Ottoman war was hanging by a thread at that time. Unexpectedly, the death of Sigismund August on 7 July 1572, that caused interregnum in Poland, distracted both sides' attention from Moldavia. The Poles recognized John as the prince of Moldavia, while the Ottomans focused on attaining positive results of elections, i.e. not allowing the member of House of Habsburg to be elected, and had no more reasons to exacerbate the tensions in relations with Poland.<sup>11</sup>

It is worth noting, that in the era of Jagiellonian dynasty Polish political activity usually aimed at maintaining good relations with the Ottoman Porte. Conflicts were usually caused by lawless action of Polish magnates, as in the event of expeditions of Sieniawski (in 1551 and 1552) or Łaski, and later Dymitr Wiśniowiecki (in 1563 and 1564). Both the king and the Sultan managed to ease the tension and prevented the escalation of the conflict each time. Nevertheless, in the last quarter of the 16th century the situation got worse. It was due to both, activation of the House of Habsburg aiming at unleashing the Polish-Turkish war (which was already apparent in the case of Heraklides), as well as the emergence of a new conflict factor—the Zaporozhian Cossacks.

The Cossacks, as an armed organization, started forming in Ukraine in 16th century. At first, it was used by Polish and Lithuanian magnates and borderland chief executives as cheap military force. As such, the Cossacks took part

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August, 21 July 1568, in Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 265–268, no. 20; Andrzej Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne*, 257–262. The king was informed directly about the change of ruler in Moldavia—Selim II to Sigismund August, Adrianopol, 8–16 January 1572, Corfus, *Documente*, p. 315, no. 159; the Grand Vizier Mehmed Sokollu pasha to Sigismund August, Adrianopol, 8–16 January 1572, *ibidem*, p. 317, no. 160.

9 Dragnev et al., *Domnii*, pp. 125–130.

10 Dariusz Milewski, "Walka o tron mołdawski w 1572 roku," in *Z dziejów wojskowości polskiej. Epoka staropolska, czasy zaborów, czasy najnowsze*, ed. D. Milewski, (Kraków: Pijarów, 2011), pp. 37–47; Marek Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość polska w XVI wieku. Tom II. Lata 1548–1575*, (Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry, 2012), pp. 280–295.

11 Janusz Pajewski, "Turcja wobec elekcji Walezego," *Przegląd Powszechny*, 50 (1933) pp. 9–10; Dariusz Milewski, "Polityka zagraniczna bez króla. Rzeczpospolita wobec problemu mołdawsko-tureckiego w okresie pierwszego bezkrólewia," in *Szlachta polska i jej dziedzictwo. Księga na 65 lat Prof. dr. hab. Jana Dziegielewskiego*, ed. D. Kuźmina, (Warsaw: Aspra, 2013), 155–167.

in operations initiated by chief executives—Ostafi Daszkiewicz and Bernard Pretwicz in the first half of the 16th century, directed against the Tatars, and became famous, among others, through victorious expedition to Ochakov in 1545.<sup>12</sup> Prince Dymitr Wiśniowiecki widely used their services, for instance, on his arbitrary expedition for the Moldavian throne in 1563, which ended with his captivity and death in Istanbul.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the Cossacks themselves initiated more and more operations directed against Turkish and Tatar properties. They exacerbated the situation on the borderland. Sigismund August already tried to find the remedy for it. The king acted in two ways. On the one hand he prohibited arbitrary expeditions—the proclamation in this matter was issued on 20 November 1568—on the other hand, he tried to harness the Cossacks and use them in the interest of the state. For that purpose, first Cossack register was made in 1569. The Cossacks who were registered, were supposed to receive a small remuneration from the ruler (2,5 zloty and clothes) and serve in defence of the country. The register, counting up to 300 persons, was organized by Crown Field Hetman Jerzy Jazłowiecki until 1572.<sup>14</sup> In the face of the king's imminent death and confusion caused by two interregna closely related in time (1572–1576), normalizing the Cossacks matters could have ended successfully. Meanwhile, the Cossacks appeared as an independent force in the Polish-Turkish relations.

A new change of the ruler in Moldavia was a great opportunity. John the Terrible was defeated with the same weapon that he used himself—another candidate for the Moldavian throne, Peter the Lambe, brother of Alexander, prince of Walachia, offered the Ottomans to increase the forced tribute from Moldavia, providing he would become its ruler. John could defend himself by compromising on increasing the forced tribute, however, he knew exactly how it would end. He refused and rebelled against the Turks. He asked the Poles for help. Unfortunately, for Poland it was the time of short reign of Henri of Valois, who left for France in June 1574, leaving the country in a difficult situation. Neither him nor Polish elites were interested in supporting the Moldavian

12 M. Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość polska w XVI wieku. Tom I. Lata 1500–1548*, (Zabrze, 2011), pp. 322–342.

13 Władysław A. Serczyk, *Na dalekiej Ukrainie. Dzieje Kozaczyzny do 1648 roku*, (Kraków: Avalon, 2008), pp. 59–66; Iłona Czamańska, *Wiśniowieccy. Monografia rodu*, (Poznań 2007), 67–82. Ottoman sources about D. Wiśniowiecki are reviewed by Ф. Туранли, *Козацька доба історії України в османсько-турецьких писемних джерелах (друга половина XVI–перша чверть XVIII століття)*, (Kiev, 2016), pp. 182–196.

14 Serczyk, *Na dalekiej Ukrainie*, pp. 66–68, 80–81; Maciej Franz, *Wojskowość Kozaczyzny Zaporoskiej w XVI–XVII wieku. Geneza i charakter*, (Toruń: Wydawn. Adam Marszałek, 2002), pp. 102–105.

prince against the Ottomans. Yet he managed to get 1200 Cossacks (at his own expense) under the command of ataman Jan Świerczowski. They accessed Moldavia without the consent of Polish authorities, as independent participants of a forthcoming war.<sup>15</sup>

The Moldavian campaign in 1574, which was written up by Leonard Gorecki and Marcin Bielski in the 16th century, is well known in the literature. Thus, there is no reason to present it in detail.<sup>16</sup> We shall focus on the Cossacks' activity. They took active part in the battles from the very beginning and largely contributed to the initial success of John. In March 1574, Świerczowski joined the Moldavian army that surprised and vanquished the Wallachians and Turks near Focșani in the south of Moldavia. In April, the Cossacks participated in the invasion of Wallachia, conquest of Bucharest and siege of Brăila, where the Turkish garrison defended itself in the castle. The Cossacks, supported by a few hundred warriors of the Moldavian cavalry, defeated the contingent of 2000 persons sent from Kilia. Following this success, John ceased besieging the castle in Brăila and left for Bender—the Ottoman fortress upon Dniester, standing guard over Moldavia.

The situation from the previous siege repeated: the city was conquered, but the castle resisted. The Ottomans sent the rescue from Akkerman, however, the Cossacks confronted it. Świerczowski vanquished the Turks in the Budjak steppes and accessed Akkerman, then partially burned it and plundered. Another battle with a few thousand Turkish-Ottoman warriors took place near Akkerman in May. The battle's major part belonged to the Cossacks, who cannonaded the enemy and then attacked it and forced to move to defence. Moldavian military reserve contributed to Świerczowski's victory.

As can be seen, the Cossacks had a significant role in the first period of battles, as they often enough allowed the hospodar to succeed and effectively defend Moldavia from the Turkish-Wallachian intervention. Unfortunately, John could not expect any further rescue from Poland, even though he was hoping for help from Albert Łaski and prince Wasyl Ostrogski. Despite that, the concentration of significant Turkish troops took place—reckoned, 20 thousand warriors—who got across the Danube near Galați and accessed Moldavia territory. Czarnowicz, burgrave of Hotin, who was sent to disable the crossing, let

15 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, II, p. 288.

16 See Leonard Gorecki, *Opisanie wojny Iwona hospodara wołoskiego z Selimem II, cesarzem tureckim, toczonej w roku 1574*, transl. W. Syrokomla, (Petersburg-Mohylew 1855); M. Bielski, *Kronika Marcina Bielskiego*, vol. 3, ed. K.J. Turowski, (Sanok 1856), 1345–1358; M. Грушевський, *Історія України-Руси*, vol. 7, part 1, (Київ 1995), pp. 147–148; Zdzisław Spieralski, *Awantury mołdawskie*, (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna 1967), pp. 134–137; Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, II, pp. 288–292.

the Wallachians bribe him and passed the enemy across the river. John had to give up on besieging Bender and went south to face the Turkish army. The battle was fought on 9–10 June 1574 at the Kahul Lake and ended with the Moldavian prince's troops defeat. One of the reasons for this was the attitude of some Moldavians, who preferred to surrender to the Ottomans than risk further war of doubtful result. John closed himself in an entrenched camp, however, on 11 June he surrendered to the Turks under the condition of sending him to the Sultan and discharging the Cossacks. Sadly, the condition was not fulfilled—the prince and major part of the Cossacks leaving the cantonment died. The twelve of them survived, including Świerczowski, who was later redeemed by the Poles.

The campaign of 1574 ended with the victory of the Turks and placing a new prince, Peter V (1574–1591), on a Moldavian throne. There were no direct after-effects in the Polish-Turkish relations, despite the Cossacks' active participation in the battles.<sup>17</sup> As it was two years earlier, avoiding war resulted from a new interregnum in Poland and the Ottomans' interest in electing the candidate that would suit them best. Porte's dissatisfaction was expressed 'only' through organizing two big Tatar raids in autumn 1574 and 1575, which caused significant damage regarding weak Poland's defense and Hetman Jazłowiecki's death in spring 1575. The only reply was the Cossacks' punitive raid under the command of prince Bohdan Różyński against Akkerman Tatars at the end of October 1575.<sup>18</sup> The election of Stephan Báthory, the prince of Transylvania, in December 1575 met the Turkish expectations—especially due to the fact that it prevented taking over the throne in Cracow by Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II, a member of the Austrian House of Habsburg.<sup>19</sup> Arbitrary participation of the Cossacks in war in 1574 was, undoubtedly, beneficial for placation of the Polish-Ottoman relations. Nevertheless, the forthcoming years were to show that such Cossack actions would trial the relations between Poland and Porte.

At the beginning of his kingship in Poland, Stephan Báthory had to deal with taming Gdańsk, that was conducive to the House of Habsburg, and fighting off the Moscow invasion of the Livonia (1577). Therefore, he did not want any trouble in the relations with Porte and quickly led to the renewal of the peace

17 Selim II to the Polish lords, Istanbul, 31 July–9 August 1574, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz (ed.), *Katalog dokumentów tureckich. Dokumenty do dziejów Polski i krajów ościennych w latach 1455–1672*, (Warsaw: Pan. Wyd. Nauk., 1959), pp. 212–213, no. 220.

18 Bielski, *Kronika*, III, pp. 1365–1367; Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, II, pp. 269–278.

19 Halil Inalcik, *Imperium osmańskie. Epoka klasyczna 1300–1600*, transl. J. Hunia, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2006), p. 52.

treaty.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, in spring 1577, Iwan Podkowa appeared as candidate for Moldavian throne. He was a Cossack, introducing himself as a half-brother of the prince John.<sup>21</sup> He made use of the Moldavians dissatisfaction of Peter the lame reign, and at the end of August, together with a small formation of 330 Cossacks, invaded Moldavia. He had to withdraw and the prince complained about the invasion to the king.<sup>22</sup> Podkowa counted for the king's support, however, Báthory ordered to arrest him instead. The order was not followed, and Podkowa, making use of prince Janusz Zbaraski's quiet support, collected several hundred of Cossacks and entered Moldavia again on 11 November 1577. At the end of the same month he conquered Jassy and started ruling as John IV. It did not last long. Peter the lame escaped to Wallachia, from where he came back with a new army and, at the end of December 1577, forced Podkowa to withdraw into the Polish borders. Podkowa's operation created a dangerous situation in Polish-Turkish relations. Mehemed II Girey, the new Crimean Khan, in winter sent his troops in Russia, an expedition which was interpreted as a revenge for the Cossack expedition to Moldavia. Sultan Murād III complained in his letters and threatened with sending the Ottoman army against the king, unless he sorted out the Cossacks.<sup>23</sup> The situation was even worse, as the Cossacks, together with Alexander—Podkowa's brother, invaded Moldavia again in March 1578. This time they were defeated and unfortunate claimant died without taking over Jassy.<sup>24</sup>

Stephan Báthory's reaction to those events was categorical. He ordered to arrest and put on trial Iwan Podkowa, who gave himself up to the king's mercy and came to Warsaw for the Sejm debates in February 1578. Podkowa was sentenced to death and the order was executed on 16 June 1578 in Lviv

20 The *'ahd-name* sent by Murād III to King Stephan Báthory, Istanbul, 17 July 1577 (Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 269–278, no. 21) and the royal confirmation of the treaty, Malbork, 5 November 1577, *ibidem*, pp. 279–283 (review pp. 123–125); Kazimierz Dopierała, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski z Turcją za Stefana Batorego*, (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), pp. 47–66.

21 About Podkowa see Dariusz Milewski, "Mołdawia w polityce Stefana Batorego—sprawa Iwana Podkowy," in: *Stefan Batory—król Rzeczypospolitej i książę Siedmiogrodu*, ed. Adrienne Körmendy and Radosław Lolo, (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztora, 2008), pp. 129–158.

22 Peter the lame to Stephan Báthory, Jassy, 6 September 1577, Corfus, *Documente*, pp. 335–336, no. 170.

23 Murād III to Stephan Báthory, Istanbul, 10 March 1578 in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III/1, pp. 10–11.

24 J. Zamoyski to K. Radziwiłł, Warsaw, 7 April 1578, W. Sobieski (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego*, vol. 1, (Warsaw, 1904) p. 213, no. 199; III to Stephan Báthory, Istanbul, 25 April 1578 in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III/1, pp. 14–15.

in the presence of the sultan's emissary. The king also ordered the voivode of Kiev, prince Constantine of Ostrog, to eliminate the Cossack settlements and appealed for borderland chief executives to help in that operation. He justified his decision with the fact, that the Cossacks harmed the Tatars, provoking them to raids.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, undaunted Cossacks together with Peter the Broomstick—an alleged brother of the prince Bogdan IV, at the end of July accomplished another expedition in Moldavia. The king ordered the Hetman Mikołaj Sieniawski and the Starosta of Bratslav Jerzy Struś to stop the Cossacks.<sup>26</sup> He also forewarned the Sultan and the hospodar about the Cossacks' arbitrary expedition and the precautionary measures he made.<sup>27</sup> The Cossacks did manage to cross the border line of the Dniester river and conquered Soroca, however, they were quickly defeated and the claimant died.<sup>28</sup> Under the command of a certain Konstanty, they made their last expedition in October.<sup>29</sup> Similarly to the previous ones, it ended with failure. This time, however, its leader managed to escape and took refuge in Moscow. Stephan Báthory maintained good relations with Porte and renewed the agreement with Crimea, where in spring 1578, Marcin Broniowski (royal secretary) was sent.<sup>30</sup>

The Cossack action in the first years of Stephan Báthory's reign reached incredible intensity. They established themselves an ambitious goal to place their own prince in Moldavia, which exceeded their previous plundering intentions. The Cossack expeditions to Moldavia in the years 1577–1578, that were somewhat the continuation of their commitment in war in 1574, were a real threat to the Polish-Turkish peace. They were made not only contrary to the will of Polish authorities, but also—what the king accused the Cossacks of—in the

25 Stephan Báthory to K. Ostrogski, Warsaw, 4 April 1578 (J. Janicki (ed.), *Akta historyczne do panowania Stefana Batorego króla polskiego od 3 marca 1578 do 18 kwietnia 1579 r.*, (Warsaw, 1881), 31, no. 23); the universal to starosts, Warsaw, 4 April 1578 (*ibidem*, 33–34, no. 25).

26 Stephan Báthory to M. Sieniawski, Lwów, 27 July 1578 (Janicki, *Akta*, 131, no. 83); Stephan Báthory to J. Struś, Lwów, 27 July 1578 (*ibidem*, 130, no. 81).

27 Stephan Báthory to Murād III, Lwów, 28 July 1578 (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, 111/1, 19–20); Stephan Báthory to Peter the Lame, Lwów, 28 July 1578 (Janicki, *Akta*, 133–134, no. 86).

28 J. Piotrowski to A. Opaliński, Lwów, 11 August 1578 in Ignacy Polkowski (ed.), *Sprawy wojenne króla Stefana Batorego. Dyjaryjusze, relacje, listy i akta z lat 1576–1586*, (Kraków: Nakładem Akademii Umiejętności, 1887), p. 129.

29 Peter the Lame to Stephan Báthory, Jassy, 19 September 1578 in Corfus, *Documente*, 351, no. 182.

30 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International Diplomacy on the European periphery (15th–18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 103–104. The Polish envoy left an interesting description of his mission see Martinus Broniewski, *Tartariae descriptio. Opus Tatarii*, transl. E. Śnieżewska, (Łódź, 2011).



interest of Moscow.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the Polish-Turkish war suited the tsar Ivan IV. For that purpose, he persuaded the Cossacks to invade the Tatars in spring 1576.<sup>32</sup> This time, there was no Moscow-Cossack cooperation, which resulted from determined action of Stephan Báthory. He not only successfully fought against the Cossack expeditions to Moldavia, but also tried to give the Zaporozhians an alternative. To that end, he renewed and reorganized the Cossack register (that declined after the death of Sigismund August), so that he connected part of the Cossacks with Poland and gained control over them.<sup>33</sup> In the short term, he also used them in the campaigns against Moscow in the years 1579–1581.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the peace with Moscow resulted in a new activity of the Cossacks in the south. In 1583, with Manuilă—son of John the Brave, they went to Moldavia. When Jerzy Struś confronted them, they turned south and accessed Bendery, plundering the town (the castle remained under the Turkish command). Another Cossack group attacked Tatar properties near Perekop. The Sultan protested and demanded ransom, so Polish king delivered the cannons that were stolen by the Cossacks and promised to punish them. At the same time however, he raised the registered Cossacks' pay and moved them from Ukraine to Podolia, to control them.<sup>35</sup>

It soon appeared, that it was not enough. The expedition in 1583 started the whole series of the Cossack raids on the Black Sea coasts. They carried out the invasions on the land and sea—Cossack *chaikas* (boats) streamed down the Dnieper towards the Black Sea and were in operation along its coasts. The attacks were directed against both, the Tatar and Turkish properties. Their detailed analysis would be far too tiresome, especially due to the fact, that they are well presented in the literature.<sup>36</sup> For instance, in 1584 the Cossacks plundered Ochakov, first killing the royal emissary, who was supposed to collect the

31 Stephan Báthory to Murād III, Lwów, 28 July 1578 in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III/1, pp. 19–20.

32 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość polska*, III, pp. 97–98.

33 The ordinance “Postanowienie z Niżowcy”, Lwów, 16 September 1578 in Janicki, *Akta*, 336–338, no. 160. New register, written in 1581, included 530 men under Jan Oryszowski's command, Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, p. 104; M. Franz, *Wojskowość Kozaczyzny*, pp. 106–107.

34 The Báthory's expeditions against Moscow discussed Henryk Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582,” *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości*, 16 (1970), 2, pp. 63–123; 17 (1971), 1, pp. 24–51; 17 (1971), 2, pp. 81–151; 18 (1972), 1, pp. 3–92; 18 (1972), 2, pp. 43–104 and Jerzy Besala, *Stefan Batory*, (Poznań: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2010), pp. 236–335.

35 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, pp. 106–107.

36 Tadeusz Górski, *Flotylle kozackie w służbie Jagiellonów i Wazów*, (Gdańsk: Wydawn. L & L, 2006), pp. 132–133; Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, pp. 107–110.

horses which the Cossacks took from the Tatars. A year later, under the command of Jan Oryszowski, they invaded Crimea twice, and in 1586 fought off a retaliatory Tatar expedition upon Dnieper and plundered Akkerman again. The apogee was in 1589, when ataman Zachar Kułaga led the Cossacks to the Tatar harbour Gözleve. The town was plundered, even though the Tatars managed to displace the aggressor. In the same year they again plundered Akkerman and Bender, located in the north of Dniester, and even plundered Turkish Azov.

All those activities destabilized the Polish-Ottoman borderland. Turkey did not react fiercely, as it was occupied with the war with Persia until 1590. On the contrary, there was confusion in Poland after Stephan Báthory's death in 1586 and double election of Sigismund III Vasa and Maximilian III of Austria in 1587. The war of Polish throne definitely ended with a treaty of Bytom and Będzin, concluded between Poland and emperor Rudolf II in 1589, still it effectively absorbed the Poles' attention. The Cossacks took the opportunity and did their own thing.

Nevertheless, the plunder of 1589 finally quickened the Turkish-Tatar side to respond decisively. In August 1589 Poland was invaded by a large amount of Tatar warriors who devastated Russia. The activities of Jan Zamoyski, the Great Crown Hetman, turned out belated. Moreover, during the spring Sejm debates in Warsaw (March–April 1590), an Ottoman emissary came with provocative demands, which were recognized as an announcement of war. Hetman Zamoyski took the opportunity and forced through the resolutions enhancing his power as the head of the army, and achieved consent for high war taxes. Fortunately for Poland, the bellicose Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha was removed in Istanbul, and with help of the English diplomacy, tense Polish-Turkish relations were eased. As a result, alliance treaty between Porte and the Commonwealth was renewed in 1591.<sup>37</sup> Then, reconciliation with Crimea took place.<sup>38</sup>

As seen from the above, despite good relations between Polish kings and sultans—including victory of the anti-Habsburg candidate in the election in 1587, which came out Porte's way—the Cossacks operations in the second half of the 80s of the 16th century almost led to the outbreak of the Polish-Turkish

37 The *'ahd-name* sent by Murād III to King Sigismund III, Istanbul, 10–18 October 1591 in Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 284–293, no. 23. On Tatar incursion in 1589 and the danger of Turkish war in 1590 see M. Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, pp. 110–114; Jan-Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäische Mächte und der 'Lange Türkenkrieg' Kaiser Rudolfs II (1593–1606)*, (Vienna: Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993), pp. 111–114.

38 The *'ahd-name* sent by Khan Ghazi II Girey to King Sigismund III and his subjects, 14 February–14 March 1592 in Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate*, pp. 769–776, no. 34.

war. Neither party of the potential conflict—the Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire—was interested in it. Nevertheless, keeping the peace involved strong commitment of Polish diplomacy, supported by the Englishmen wishing to direct the Ottomans against the House of Habsburg. The Poles, appreciating the more and more important role of the Cossacks, during the Sejm debates in 1590 forbade them expeditions abroad and obliged them to swear allegiance to the Commonwealth and submit to Polish leadership.<sup>39</sup> The restrictions, of course, were not accepted by the Cossacks and contributed to the outbreak of the first uprising in Ukraine. It was led by Krzysztof Kosiński, lasted two years (1591–1593) and was quelled mainly by the magnate armies.<sup>40</sup> However, it showed a certain pattern, that will reveal itself later in the 17th century—each attempt to reassure the Polish-Ottoman relations through submitting the Cossacks territory led to uprising and fights in Ukraine. The Commonwealth's price for the peace with Turkey was the civil war. Luckily for Poland, disputes on the Hungarian borderland which took place since the early 90s of the 16th century, led to the Ottoman-Habsburg war in 1593. They gave Poland the opportunity to review the Moldavian affairs, which were bequeathed to Hetman Jan Zamoyski by Sigismund III.<sup>41</sup> As a matter of fact, it was necessary due to a new commotion in Moldavia, in which, again, the Cossacks took part.

The Moldavia prince Peter the Lamé, could not stand the ever-growing financial demands of Porte, so he abandoned the country in 1591 and left with the property and money collected for the forced tribute. His successor, Aaron the Tyrant, raised the taxes causing rebellion against him. The Cossacks took the opportunity and invaded Moldavia again in 1592, together with Peter, who took his place on the throne in Jassy for a short period of time (he went down in the annals of history as Peter the Cossack). He was, indeed, quickly removed from it by the Turks and the Poles explained the Cossack action as a result of Habsburg provocation.<sup>42</sup>

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39 The constitution "Porządek ze strony Niżowców i Ukrainy" (*Volumina Legum*, x, (Petersburg, 1859), pp. 310–311).

40 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, pp. 259–267.

41 It was an effect of an agreement between the king and hetman, who in return gave up his opposition to the royal plans in Sweden.

42 Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. P.P. Panaitescu, (Bucharest, 1955), 209–210; Valentin Constantinov, "Mołdawia w stosunkach międzynarodowych w końcu XVI i na początku XVII wieku," in *Rzeczpospolita wobec Orientu w epoce nowożytnej*, ed. Dariusz Milewski, (Zabrze: Infort, 2011), pp. 11–12; Dariusz Milewski, "A Campaign of the Great Hetman Jan Zamoyski in Moldavia (1595). Part I. Politico-diplomatic and military preliminaries," *Codrul Cosminului*, 18 (2012), 2, pp. 269–270.

Members of the House of Habsburg, who seek peace with Poland in the face of war with the Ottomans, really tried to provoke the Polish-Turkish war using the Cossacks.<sup>43</sup> The Emperor's emissaries operated among the Cossacks in autumn 1593 and despite Polish authorities counteraction, managed to bring about the Cossack expedition in the Akkerman territory at the turn of 1593 and 1594.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the war was not provoked again, and the only—serious though—consequence was when the Tatars went across Poland to get to Hungary in summer 1594, typically causing damages and robbery.<sup>45</sup> Of course, in autumn the Cossacks went to Moldavia again. They were led by Gregory Łoboda and Simon Nalewajko, and acted in the interest of the House of Habsburg. They even managed to conquer and plunder Jassy, next they came back to Podolia.<sup>46</sup> In winter 1594/1595 members of the House of Habsburg came to terms with Sigismund Báthory, Transylvanian prince, and with his help they drew Transylvania, Moldavia, as well as Wallachia to their side. In response, in 1595 the Ottomans were preparing themselves for a campaign against rebellious vassals and even planning to annex Moldavia. It was high time for a definite intervention of Poland.

The expedition to Moldavia was made by Jan Zamoyski in August 1595. He removed the pro-Habsburg prince Stephan Răzvan and placed Jeremiah Movilă (Mohila) on the Moldavian throne, making him Polish liege. After victorious fight with the Tatars in October 1595, the Hetman managed to get Khan's consent for making such decision. In two other agreements with Sultan Mehemed III, Polish diplomacy also got Turkish approval for Movilă's rule in Moldavia and his relations with the Commonwealth.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, in

43 Of course, the House of Habsburg counted on concluding the formal alliance with Poland too see Aleksandra Barwicka, "Rzeczpospolita w planach dyplomacji papieskiej i habsburskiej w okresie wojny austriacko-tureckiej 1593–1606," *Polska wobec wielkich konfliktów w Europie nowożytnej*, ed. Ryszard Skowron, (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2009), pp. 297–307.

44 J. Zamoyski to H. Rozrażewski, Zamość, 12 January 1594 in Corfuss, *Documente*, p. 375, no. 197; Грушевський, *Історія*, vol. 7, part 1, 196–204; Milewski, "A Campaign," pp. 270–271. Gregory Łoboda was the Cossack commander.

45 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, 116–124.

46 Rajnold Heidenstein, *Dzieje Polski od śmierci Zygmunta Augusta do r. 1594*, transl. M. Gliszczyński, (St Petersburg, 1857), p. 327; J. Bielski, *Dalszy ciąg kroniki polskiej, zawierającej dzieje od 1587 do 1598 r.*, ed. F.M. Sobieszczański, (Warsaw, 1851), p. 225; Serczyk, *Na dalekiej Ukrainie*, 131–132; Milewski, Milewski, "A Campaign," pp. 275–277.

47 The Polish-Tatar agreement, Țuțora, 22 October 1595 in Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, pp. 298–302, no. 25 and 26; the 'ahd-name sent by Mehemed III to King Sigismund III, 11–20 November 1597, *ibidem*, pp. 303–312, no. 27; the 'ahd-name sent by Mehemed III to King Sigismund III, 4 August 1598 *ibidem*, pp. 313–323, no. 28;

the expedition of 1595, the Cossacks did not support Polish army. They were focused on another uprising in Ukraine, repressed in 1596.<sup>48</sup>

Definite initiative of Polish authorities and army in Moldavia and pacifying the Cossacks in Ukraine finally put a stop to their predatory activity on the Turkish-Tatar borderland. When in 1600 a new war in Moldavia broke out in connection with Michael the Brave raid, the Cossacks supported the Polish army of Jan Zamoyski that moved in. It is calculated, that there were approximately 15–17 thousand of soldiers led by Jan Zamoyski, while only about 5000 Cossacks.<sup>49</sup> They also had a significant role in the crucial battle of Bucov, which was won by the Poles thanks to the determined attack of the infantry and the Cossacks.<sup>50</sup> This way, after years of destructive invasions destabilizing the Polish-Ottoman borderland, the Cossacks finally contributed to fulfil the state-wide goals.

To sum up, we have to note the evident growth of the Cossack activity on the northern outskirts of the Black Sea. Only during the period 1576–1594 there were twenty-two Cossack expeditions, but their armies usually did not exceed three thousand people.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the number and nuisance of the raids greatly contributed to worsening of Polish-Ottoman relations. Only aversion to war in view of more urgent duties on other fronts (for Turkey—the war with Persia and members of the House of Habsburg, for Poland—the war with Moscow, interregnum and the problem of Swedish crown for the Polish House of Vasa in the late 16th century) prevented both sides from the outbreak of one. Polish forceful activity in the south-east in the 1590s reassured the situation. However, as the nearest future was to show, permanent subduing of the Cossacks was impossible. Bolder and bolder Cossack raids on the Black Sea coasts, corresponding with the Tatar raids in Ukraine as well as turbulence in Moldavia, finally brought to the outbreak of war between the Ottoman and the Commonwealth in 1620. Thus, as a result of, among others, the Cossack activity, the period of good Polish-Turkish relations ended for several decades.

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D. Milewski, "A Campaign," 19 (2013), 1, pp. 57–75; Dariusz Skorupa, *Stosunki polsko-tatarskie 1595–1623*, (Warsaw: Neriton, 2004), pp. 59–90.

48 The Semen Nalewajko uprising in 1594–1596. The Cossacks were defeated by the Crown Field Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski see Грушевський, *Історія*, vol. 7, part 1, pp. 212–232; Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, pp. 267–294.

49 Dariusz Skorupa, "Bitwa pod Bukowem 20 października 1600 r.," *Staropolska sztuka wojenna XVI–XVII wieku*, ed. Mirosław Nagielski, (Warsaw, 2002), pp. 20–24.

50 Ibid. pp. 30–32.

51 Plewczyński, *Wojny i wojskowość*, III, p. 126.

# War and Diplomacy in the Black Sea Region during the “Long War” (1593–1606)

*Ovidiu Cristea and Ovidiu Olar*

The spectacular rise and the tragic fall of the Wallachian prince Michael “the Brave” (*Mihai Viteazul*; † 1601) have inspired many contemporary authors to take up the pen, praise his victories, and mourn his death. The Silesian Balthasar Walther writes a history of the prince’s deeds between 1594 and 1599;<sup>1</sup> Stavrinos the Vestiarist dedicates a verse chronicle in demotic Greek to the *Heroic deeds of the most pious and valiant voivode Michael*, Giorgios Palamidis pens a versified *History containing all the deeds and heroic deeds and wars of the illustrious voivode Michael, prince of Wallachia, Transylvania, Moldavia until the day of his death*, while an anonymous Greek account, which probably relies on Stavrinos, laments the hero’s end.<sup>2</sup>

There are several reasons for this huge popularity. Walther, for example, had a genuine admiration for the prince; nevertheless, the publication of his book seems to be encouraged by the court of Rudolf II as an element of imperial propaganda.<sup>3</sup> For the Habsburgs, the military successes of the Wallachian lord proved that the infidels could be defeated and offered a good opportunity

- 1 *Brevis et vera descriptio rerum al illustrissimo, amplissimo et fortissimo militiæ contra patriæ suæ Reique Publicæ Christianæ hostes duce ac Domino Domino Ion Michaelæ Moldaviæ Transalpinæ sive Walachiæ Palatino gestarum*. For the edition of the text, see Dan Simonescu, “Cronica lui Balthasar Walther despre Mihai Viteazul în raport cu cronicile contemporane,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 3 (1959), pp. 7–99. Walther started his work in 1597 and published it in Görlitz in 1599.
- 2 For the lament: Viki Doulavera, “‘Αγνωστος θρήνος για τον θάνατο του Μιχαήλ του Γενναίου,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 28 (1998), pp. 255–274. For Stavrinos’ *Ανδραγαθίες του εὐσεβεστάτου και ἀνδρειοτάτου Μιχαήλ Βοεβόδα* and Palamidis’ *Ἱστορία περιέχουσα πάσας τὰς πράξεις και ἀνδραγαθίες και πολέμους του ἐκλαμπροτάτου Μιχαήλ Βοηβόδα, ἀυθέντη Οὐγγροβλαχίας, Τρανσυλβανίας, Μολδοβίας, ὡς τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς τελευτῆς αὐτοῦ*: Émile Legrand, *Recueil de poèmes historiques en grec vulgaire relatifs à la Turquie et aux Principautés danubiennes* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1877), pp. 16–127; cf. Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire* II (Paris: Maisonneuve & Cie, 1881), pp. 183–230. Recently, the two verse chronicles have received increased attention: Alfred Vincent, “From Life to Legend: The Chronicles of Stavrinos and Palamidis on Michael the Brave,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 25 (1995), pp. 165–238; Tudor Dinu, *Mihai Viteazul, erou al eposului grec* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008); Alfred Vincent, “Byzantium after Byzantium? Two Greek Writers in Seventeenth-century Wallachia,” in *Byzantine Culture in Translation*, ed. Amelia Brown and Bronwen Neil (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 221–242.
- 3 This is the hypothesis of Dan Simonescu, “Cronica,” p. 51.

to ask for military and financial support in the war against the Ottomans. As for Stavrinou and Palamidis, a plausible explanation is formulated by the Venetian *bailo* Girolamo Capello, in October 1600: many Greeks were hoping that Michael's anti-Ottoman campaigns would lead to the restoration of their lost Empire.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the echo of Michael's victories reached quite far shores both in Western as in South-Eastern Europe.<sup>5</sup> The "admirable" prince (του παινετοῦ Μιχαήλη) might still have been alive when the arrogant and ridiculous soldier Koustoulieris, a character of the Cretan comedy of *Katzourbos*, in his vain attempt to woo a courtesan, menaces to go to Wallachia and prove his value in the anti-Turkish war.<sup>6</sup> More impressively, Michael's exploits are mentioned in the history of Venetian Crete by Ioannis Vergitsis, a Padua-educated jurist from Candia, close to the *Accademia degli Stravaganti*.<sup>7</sup>

The name of Wallachia and of its inhabitants might have sounded exotic to the readers of a history of the Venetian Realm of Crete, although some of them (the ones whom could understand not only Italian, but also Greek) might have been familiar with *Erotokritos*, the "poem of love" composed by Vitsentzos Kornaros, in which the King of the Vlachs, Vladistratos, and his nephew, the

4 'La speranza ch'avevano dall'esaltazione di Micali Valacco, il cui nome era con gran devozione celebrato da Greci, e con tanto giubilo ascoltate le sue azioni, che erano portati a gran concetto di rivedere per mezzo suo l'Imperio de' greci rinovato, che se le cose di Micali fossero passate con maggior prosperità in quest'ultimo, al sicuro si sentivano gagliardi moti e sollevazioni in tutti i Greci'—*Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al Senato* xiv. *Costantinopoli. Relazioni inedite (1512–1789)*, ed. Maria Pia Pedani (Padova: Ausilio Aldo, 1996), pp. 434–435; Ștefan Andreescu, "Mihai Viteazul și restaurarea Imperiului bizantin: mărturia ambasadorilor venețieni la Constantinopol," in Andreescu, *Perspective medievale* (Bucharest: Nemira, 2002), pp. 137–155 [Italian version: "Michele il Bravo e l'idea di riedificazione dell'Impero bizantino: le testimonianze degli ambasciatori veneziani a Costantinopoli," in *Dall'Adriatico al Mar Nero: veneziani e romeni, tracciati di storie comuni*, ed. Grigore Arbore Popescu (Rome, 2003), pp. 51–66].

5 In 1594–1595, the imperial propaganda was focused on the Transylvanian prince Sigismund Bathory; see Carmen Espejo, "The Prince of Transylvania: Spanish News of the War against the Turks," in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 512–541. In spite of its title, the paper deals with the news concerning both Transylvania and Wallachia. For the Michael's deeds reflected in the printed news of the time, see Ovidiu Cristea, *Puterea cuvintelor. Știri și război in sec. XV–XVI*, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2014), pp. 315–371.

6 Georgios Hortatsis, *Κατζούρμπος*, ed. Linos Politis (Iraklion, 1964), xvii–xix, 17–19; Alfred Vincent, "From Life to Legend," 167. For the play, see Idem, "Comedy," in *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete*, ed. David Holton (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 103–128 (105–107).

7 Idem, "Η Βλαχία και οι Βλάχοι στον Ερωτόκριτο," in Λοιβή, *Εις μνήμην Ανδρέα Γ. Καλοκαιρινού* (Iraklion: Εταιρία Κρητικών Ιστορικών Μελετών, 1994), 51–92 (80); Idem, "From Life to Legend," p. 167.

“excellent” Aristos, attack the Kingdom of Athens.<sup>8</sup> Vergitsis does not mention it; perhaps he believed Prince Michael was quite famous and did not require any geographical coordinates. However, his interest in the Wallachian ruler was indirect: Michael is mentioned in a panegyric of Meletios Pigas, a Cretan-born Greek patriarch of Alexandria and, for a brief period of time, *locum tenens* of the Greek patriarch of Constantinople (+ 1601).<sup>9</sup>

The fragment is quite autonomous and it interrupts the narration of the events to such a degree that the author feels compelled to explain the rationale behind his choice. According to him, despite the fact that the excursus seems out of topic, it still presents the remarkable deeds of a Cretan-born leader of the Eastern Christian flock. It is not by chance that the whole 17th chapter of the *History*, which starts in 1594, opens with an epigram dedicated by Giovanni Francesco Pinardi to Pigas, mentioned by his lay name, Emmanuel.<sup>10</sup> Inspired by the then *en vogue* literary genre of the biography of notable men, which he had already applied in his *Historia della peste nel Regno di Candia*, but relying also on his own experience, Vergitsis writes an *exemplum* which mirrors the exemplary conduct of a man confronted with a difficult choice. Forced by the Ottomans to negotiate the peace between the Porte and Michael ‘the Brave’, the rebellious prince of Wallachia, Pigas—convinced that such a mission is impossible—eventually chose to take refuge in the monastery of St John on the island of Patmos, before resuming his duties as Patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>11</sup>

Following in the footsteps of the Cretan chronicler, we shall read the fragment concerning Pigas and Michael in the light of Venetian archival documents, we shall argue that such a comparative approach is important for

8 David Holton, *Erotokritos* (Bristol, 1991), pp. 53–54; Vincent, “Η Βλαχία και οι Βλάχοι στον Ερωτόκριτο”; Vincent, “Η Βλαχία και οι Βλάχοι στον Ερωτόκριτο: Επιστρέφοντας σ’ ένα παλαιό αίνιγμα,” in *Neograeca Bucurestiensia* II. *In honorem Constantini Dimadis*, ed. Tudor Dinu (Bucharest, 2011), pp. 58–79 (Greek), 80–99 (Romanian). See also Alfred Vincent, “Conflicting visions: Writing from Crete and the Danubian Lands after the Fall of the City,” in *The Greek World under Ottoman and Western Domination: 15th–19th Centuries*, ed. Paschalis Kitromilides and Dimitris Arvanitakis (New York, 2008), pp. 106–114.

9 For the *History*, see Vicenza—*Biblioteca civica Bertoliana*, ms. 1247/1, ff. 1–9 (*Epitome de’ libri tutti dell’Historia del Regno di Candia descritta da Giovanni Vergici candiano 1597*); Venice—*Marc. Ital.* VII—648 (8067), ff. 37–46; *Marc. Ital.* VII—657 (7481), ff. 118–132; *Marc. Ital.* XI—184 (7414), ff. 57–86. See also Nikolaos M. Panagiotakis, “Ἐρευνα ἐν Βενετίᾳ,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 5 (1968), pp. 45–118 (79–81); Irini Lydaki, “Ἰωάννης Βεργίτσης, Κρητικὸς λόγιος τοῦ 16ου αἰώνα. Βιογραφικὰ καὶ ἐργογραφικὰ,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 29 (1999), pp. 225–272 (244–254). The fragment under discussion here is to be found in *Marc. Ital.* XI—184 (7414), ff. 75–77.

10 Lydaki, “Ἰωάννης Βεργίτσης,” pp. 260–261.

11 Lydaki, “Ἰωάννης Βεργίτσης,” pp. 251–252. For the context of his *History*, see Alfred Vincent, “Scritti italiani di Creta veneziana,” *Sincronie*, 2 (1999–2000), 3, pp. 131–162.



those trying to reconstruct the history of the events in the Black Sea area at the end of the 16th century, and we shall advocate—very briefly—for a connected history of the “Long War” against the Turks.<sup>12</sup>

## 1 Pigas

Meletios Pigas, one of the most remarkable Greek ecclesiastics of the 16th century, was appointed lieutenant (ἐπιτηρητής) of the Patriarchal see of Constantinople in early 1597.<sup>13</sup> According to our Vergitsis, he gladly accepted the task, embarking immediately on an ambitious reforming project that targeted the dissolute habits of the clergy.

The reforming measures that Pigas undertook generated a lot of hatred. In order to get rid of such an uncomfortable character, the representatives of the high Greek clergy accused him of cultivating friendly relationships with enemies of the Ottoman Empire, especially with the rebel prince of Wallachia. As a consequence, the Sultan ordered the Patriarch to write to the troublemaker and ask him to suspend the hostilities. Failing to convince the ruler that he held such an authority, Pigas had no choice but to comply with the request. However, Michael ‘the Brave’ decided to take advantage of the situation and to attack the Ottoman army irrespective of a positive response and of the signing of a truce. Infuriated, the Sultan accused the patriarch of conspiracy and treason: Pigas would have instigated the Wallachian prince to sign a fake peace and to use it in order to better prepare his attack. Informed just in time by a well-connected friend, the scapegoat took shelter in the monastery dedicated

12 Despite the importance of the topic, although one may count several important contributions, there is no global work on the conflict between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans that started at the end of the 16th century. For an analysis of the European powers and the Long War, see Jan Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte und der “Lange Türkenkrieg” Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1593–1606)* (Vienna: Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993); for an analysis of the Ottoman military organization, see Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: the Ottoman military campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606* (Vienna: vwgö, 1988); more recently, Zoltán Péter Bagi, *Stories of the Long Turkish War* (Beau Bassin: Globeedit, 2018), focused on several aspects of war in the Imperial camp.

13 Manousos I. Manousakas, “Γράμματα πατριαρχών καὶ μητροπολιτῶν τοῦ ΙΣΤ’ αἰῶνος ἐκ τοῦ ἀρχείου τῆς ἐν Βενετίᾳ Ἑλληνικῆς Ἀδελφότητος,” *Θησαυρίσματα*, 5 (1968), pp. 7–22 (18–22, ill. 2). For Pigas: Gerhard Podskalsky SJ, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453–1821). Die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens* (München, 1988), pp. 128–135; Vasiliki Ch. Tzoga, *Μελέτιος Πηγᾶς (1550–1601) Πατριάρχης Αλεξανδρείας. Βίος—Δράση—Εργογραφία* [PhD Thesis] (Athens 2009).

to St John in Patmos, then returned to Alexandria and resumed his ecclesiastical duties.<sup>14</sup>

Vergitsis does not hesitate to call Pigas's escape a miracle. He even indicates the reports of Girolamo Capello as source of information. Nevertheless, the secret reports of the *bailo* support only in part his claims, as they tell a slightly more complex story.

On 12 April 1597, for example, the *bailo* informed the Venetian Senate that the grand vizier Damat Ibrahim Paşa had pushed Pigas to accept the nomination as patriarch of Constantinople because the Ottomans considered him the most suited negotiator of a truce with Michael 'the Brave'. Pigas had reluctantly accepted the task in exchange for several privileges, such as the exemption of the payment of taxes other than the yearly *haraç*; the sum was fixed at 2,000 gold pieces, which represented a very low amount of money in comparison with the *haraç* paid in the previous years. Capello assured the Patriarch that he could count on Venetian support and several Greek *archonts* expressed similar intent.<sup>15</sup>

Pigas had already informed the *bailo* of the steps he had taken with respect to the negotiations for peace with the Wallachian prince. On 27 March 1597, Capello stated that the Patriarch had shown him letters from Michael, who had sent agents both to Pigas and to Edward Barton, the English ambassador in Constantinople. In addition, Pigas had delivered a speech on the state of the Christian powers, on the need for peace, on the constant Ottoman menace, and on the weakness of the Turkish Empire.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, this *Discorso* is beyond reach.<sup>17</sup> Still, several letters exchanged by the Patriarch and by the prince have survived.

14 *Marc. Ital.* XI—184 (7414), ff. 75–77.

15 ASV—*Rubicari Constantinopoli* D6\*, f. 150<sup>v</sup>–151<sup>r</sup>; *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts—Venice IX. (1592–1603)* (London 1897), p. 265 (nº. 568). See also ASV—Senato—*Dispacci Costantinopoli* 9, f. 84<sup>r</sup> (20 May 1597). The fragment was first commented by Oskar Halecki: *From Florence to Brest (1439–1596)* (Rome-N. York: Fordham University Press, 1958), p. 357; Halecki, "Rome, Constantinople et Moscou au temps de l'Union de Brest," in *L'Église et les églises 1054–1954. Neuf siècles de douloureuse séparation entre l'Orient et l'Occident. Études et travaux sur l'Unité chrétienne offerts à dom Lambert Beauduin*, vol. I (Chevetogne, 1954), pp. 460–463.

16 ASV—*Rubicari Constantinopoli* D6\*, f. 144<sup>v</sup>–145<sup>r</sup>; *Hurmuzaki* IV/2, 222 (nº CLXXXVII—dated 27 May); *Calendar of State Papers*, 263 (nº. 560).

17 *Discorso del patriarca intorno lo stato de principi christiani, et delle ragioni della pace, et pericolo dell'Impero Turchesco, et debolezza delle sue forze*. The reports addressed by Cappello to the Senate (ASV—Senato—*Dispacci Costantinopoli*, filza 45) are no longer available.

The first of them is dated 11 February 1597.<sup>18</sup> Michael writes to Pigas, mentions previous ‘other letters’ he had sent, and invites the Patriarch in Wallachia to grant him benediction and absolution for the sins (*accio che primamente ne diate perdono per peccati nostri & beneditione*), then to sign the peace treaty. For Michael, Pigas, as the leader of the Church, had the unavoidable and implicit task to mediate a peace (*inevitabile carico di insegnare la pace*) and to pray for the safety of the entire world. For the prince the way to peace was long and tortuous. He claimed his good will towards the sultan but cast doubts about the Ottoman true intentions. Michael argued that, previously, the Tatars and an Ottoman bey infringed the truce and raided his realm. Such a hostile action, which—according to the prince—was more destructive than Sinan pasha’s expedition in Wallachia in 1595, raised in his views serious questions about the willingness of the Porte to conclude the peace.<sup>19</sup> Despite the suspicion Michael’s conclusion was optimistic. He expressed his confidence that, eventually, the enmity will be casted away and that the desired peace will be finally concluded.<sup>20</sup>

The letter would suggest that the initiative belonged to the prince; however, both Vergitsis and the reports of the English ambassador Edward Barton—a friend and ally of Pigas—credit the patriarch with the initiative.<sup>21</sup> Such conclusion is supported by an obvious fact. Michael would not have dared to approach the Ottomans without an intermediary trusted by both camps. The Patriarch of Alexandria, in his turn, would not have established a contact with the prince without the grand vizier’s approval. Thus, the claims of Vergitsis and Barton

18 *Documents concerning Rumanian History (1427–1601) collected from British Archives*, ed. Eric D. Tappe (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964), pp. 110–111 (n<sup>o</sup>. 149); Alexandru A. Botez, “O scrisoare inedită a lui Mihai Viteazul către patriarhul Alexandriei Meletie Pigas,” *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 83/5–6 (1965), pp. 584–592. See also *Calendar of State Papers*, p. 260 (n<sup>o</sup>. 555).

19 *Documents concerning Rumanian History (1427–1601)*, p. 111.

20 Ibid.: “quando perfettamente sarete cautellato (= Meletios Pigas) che sia neta & fedele la pace, movetevi in persona & venite qui da noi, accio che primamente ne diate perdono per peccati nostri & beneditione, dispoi introdurremo & fermaremo & faremo la perfetta & universale pace, insieme con gl'altri principi & Re & si risolvera la machina della inimicitia & si rallegrarano i spiriti celesti con i terrestri di questa reconciliatione”. The letter is preserved only in the Italian copy after an original witten, most probably, in Greek.

21 *Documents concerning Rumanian History*, p. 113 (n<sup>o</sup>. 151). Pigas had good relations with Barton: Elisabet A. Zachariadou, “Σημείωμα γιὰ τὸν Μελέτιο Πηγά,” *Ἡ Ἐραγιστής* 6 (1968): pp. 19–26. For the ambassador’s political interests, see Paul Cernovodeanu, “An English Diplomat at War: Edward Barton’s Attendance of the Ottoman Campaign in Central Europe,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire*, 28 (1989), pp. 429–449.

seem highly probable conclusion supported by other evidence. In August 1596<sup>22</sup> and January 1597,<sup>23</sup> *Sokolluzade* Hassan pasha of Belgrade invited the princes of Transylvania and Wallachia to resume their previous submission to the Porte. Hassan's letter used various arguments to convince Sigismund Báthory and Michael the Brave that their revolt will be pardoned by the sultan. In Istanbul, argued the pasha, everybody understood that the rebellion was provoked by the harsh policy of the former grand vizier *Koça* Sinan pasha. The latter's disappearance created thus the grounds for reconciliation. Furthermore, such favourable premises were strengthened by other circumstances. Hassan invoked his father's benevolence and friendship towards Transylvania an attitude which he, as a devout son and successor, pursued. Hassan even claimed that in 1596 convinced the sultan Mehmed III to abandon the plan to attack Transylvania and to direct his troops against the Habsburgs.<sup>24</sup> Such statement was, in Hassan's opinion, a solid argument to prove his good intentions as a mediator.

But the benevolence was doubled by a subtle menace. The failure to put an end to the rebellion would have engendered serious consequences for the former vassals as the sultan was ready to launch all his military might against them.

As one can see the Ottoman dignitary mixed both benevolent words and threats in his diplomatic endeavour. He even tried to put in contrast Sigismund Báthory and Michael the Brave stating that the latter was already pardoned by the sultan and that he received the *insignia* of power from Istanbul. In Hassan's view that was a path which had to be followed also by the prince of Transylvania.

Despite the inherent rhetoric, the aforementioned letters illustrate that the Porte launched its diplomatic offensive using various channels of communication. The Ottoman strategy conceived by the grand vizier, *Damad* Ibrahim pasha, used political actors well connected with the Wallachian and Transylvanian princes in an effort to put an end to the war.

22 There are several Latin and Italian versions of this letter. A copy from Venice was published in Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. III/2 (1576–1600), (Bucharest, 1888), doc. 230, pp. 208–209; for the Latin versions see Andrei Pippidi, "Notes et documents sur la politique balkanique de Michel le Brave", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 23 (1984), p. 346.

23 Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, vol. V (1596–1599), (Bucharest, 1932), pp. 52–56; *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană* (= MVCE) I. *Documente externe*, (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 163–167 (no. 41).

24 Such statement seems to be confirmed by Pasquale Dabri who negotiated a peace settlement with the Habsburgs in 1596 see Tamas Kruppa, "Pasquale Bruti tolmacs kalandos pragai kovetsege 1596-ban", *Lymbus*, 3 (2005), p. 36.

If Hassan pasha seem to have the main role in the negotiations with Transylvania, Meletios Pigas was the key mediator with Michael the Brave.

Eventually, Pigas never came to Wallachia. Apparently, he had his doubts with regards to the sincerity of both the Ottoman authorities and Wallachian voivode. Yet, in spite of the mutual mistrust, the correspondence kept going for a year. Pigas wrote to the prince at least four times in 1597 (on 23 May, 5 & 29 August, and 9 December).<sup>25</sup> Michael responded at least once, in December.<sup>26</sup> The prince also wrote to the Patriarch on 11 February 1598.<sup>27</sup> The letters underline the mistrust between the two camps and the delicate position of Pigas, who was under continuous Ottoman surveillance. Thus, one may understand why in the letter of 5 August Pigas advocates warmly for the conclusion of the peace. On the one hand, argued the Patriarch, the Sultan and the grand vizier punished the Ottoman bey and the Tatars guilty for an attack against Wallachia in that year; on the other hand, the Sultan was an emperor which ruled over the God's flock and who cared for his subjects as a father. No wonder that the conclusion emphasized that Michael had to put an end to the war because 'God loves peace (as the war is the God's wrath)'. For Pigas, the end of the conflict was the only way to gain the sultan's favour and protection not only for Wallachia but also for all the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the fall of Ibrahim Pasha, in November 1597, brought with it the fall of Pigas. Irrespective of previous agreements, the new grand vizier, *Hadim* ('the Eunuch') Hassan Pasha, started to press the Patriarch to pay the

25 *Hurmuzaki* XIII, 346 (n<sup>o</sup>. 3), pp. 347–348 (n<sup>o</sup>. 5), pp. 349–350 (n<sup>o</sup>. 8); *Hurmuzaki* III/1, 518–519 (n<sup>o</sup> LXXV); *Documente grecești privitoare la istoria românilor din anii 1592–1837 culese și publicate în tomul XIII din Documentele Hurmuzaki de A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus*, trans. George Murnu and Constantin Litzica (Bucharest, 1914), pp. 316–317 (n<sup>o</sup>. 3), 318 (n<sup>o</sup>. 5), 319–320 (n<sup>o</sup>. 8); *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană I. Documente externe* (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 163–167 (n<sup>os</sup> 48–49).

26 *Hurmuzaki* III/1, pp. 519–520 (n<sup>o</sup> LXXV)—letter attached to Capello's report of 31 December 1597.

27 *Hurmuzaki* III/1, pp. 521 (n<sup>o</sup> LXXIX); *Hurmuzaki* IV/2, 226–227 (n<sup>o</sup> CLXLII)—letter attached to Capello's reports of 11 March and 11 May 1598. For details, see Nicolae I. Șerbănescu, "Legăturile patriarhului Meletie Pigas cu țările române," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 63/11–12 (1945), pp. 699–716 & BOR 64/7–9 (1946), pp. 352–372; Ștefan Andreescu, "O 'pace prefăcută' la Dunărea de Jos: tratativele transilvano-muntene cu Poarta din anii 1597–1598," *Revista Istorică*, 5/11–12 (1994), pp. 1119–1148 [= Idem, *Restitutio Daciae* III. *Studii cu privire la Mihai Viteazul* (Bucharest, 1997), pp. 175–226].

28 *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană* I, pp. 163–164. A more elaborate discourse built on the same arguments can be found in the letter of 29 August 1597, *ibidem*, pp. 164–167.

debts of his predecessors. The creditors started to pile up. In April 1598, Pigas was dethroned and replaced with the unexperienced Matthaïos of Ioannina.<sup>29</sup>

As we can see, Vergitsis version on the events is partly supported by other documents. The differences are, however, important. One may wonder which scenario is most credible, the one by Vergitsis, or the one proposed by Capello? In our opinion, the second looks more realistic. Vergitsis needed a hero of Cretan origin, a model to be followed by its Cretan audience; or, such a hero could not advocate a peaceful cohabitation with the Ottomans. On the contrary, the *bailo* had all interest in circumscribing the war party/parties and the peace party/parties within the Greek Christian community of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the negotiations mediated by Meletios Pigas were a part of a wider picture. From the outbreak of the war, there were serious talks about a peace settlement between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. Sometimes the military preparations went hand in hand with diplomatic initiatives. In 1595, for instance, the English ambassador Edward Barton spoke with the grand vizier Sinan Pasha about the peace with Rudolf II just before the Ottoman expedition in Wallachia.<sup>31</sup> Next year, the Ottomans started the campaign which ended with the battle of Mezőkeresztes but, in parallel, they opened negotiations mediated by Barton and by Pasquale Brutti (or, more correct, Pasquale Dabri).<sup>32</sup> However, the conquest of Eger and the victory of Mezőkeresztes changed drastically the context and, implicitly, the basis of negotiation. This is precisely

29 ASV—*Rubicari Constantinopoli* D6\*, f. 187<sup>r</sup> (17 December 1597), 196<sup>r</sup> (25 February 1598), 204<sup>r</sup> (20 April 1598); 208<sup>r</sup> (15 May 1598). For details, see Konstantinos D. Mertzios, “Τὸ ἐν Βενετίᾳ Κρατικὸν Ἀρχεῖον Δ΄. Ὁ Ἰωαννίνων Ματθαῖος οἰκουμενικὸς πατριάρχης ἐν ἔτει 1598,” *Ἡπειρωτικὰ Χρονικά*, 15 (1940), pp. 20–21.

30 For these parties, one should consult Peter Bartl, *Der Westbalkan zwischen spanischer Monarchie und osmanischem Reich. Zur Türken-kriegsproblematik an der Wende vom 16. zum 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974); Andrei Pippidi, “Conspiracy pour la liberté. Projets et campagnes pour l’indépendance des Balkans vers 1600,” *Eastern European Quarterly*, 10/1 (1976), pp. 113–125 [= Idem, *Byzantins, Ottomans, Roumains. Le sud-est européen entre l’héritage impérial et les influences occidentales* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), 121–138 (n° VI)]; Radu G. Păun, “Enemies Within. Networks of Influence and the Military Revolts against the Ottoman Power (Moldavia and Wallachia, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries),” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gabor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden-Boston, 2013), pp. 209–249.

31 Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire. Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth Century Mediterranean World* (London: Lane, 2015), p. 417. The Ottoman dignitary reacted favourably. As Noel Malcolm (*ibidem*, 418) points out, Pasquale was the son of Marco Dabri and Lucietta Brutti. The prestige of Brutti in Constantinople explains why Pasquale was associated with his mother’s family.

32 Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 415–429; Tamas Kruppa, “Pasquale Bruti,” pp. 27–47.

why the peace talks did not bear any results. Even worse, Pasquale Brutti was killed on his way back to Constantinople by Hassan Pasha of Belgrade who wanted to pursue the war with the Habsburgs at all costs.<sup>33</sup> After the tragic end of Pasquale Brutti, a new phase of negotiations was opened at the end of 1597. According to an Italian officer in the Habsburgs' camp, Giovanni Marco Isolano, the peace talks were made possible by the imperial general Miklos Pallfy and some of his 'Turkish' friends in Buda. The discussions took place on a small island of the Danube but without any results.<sup>34</sup>

In parallel with the negotiations with the Habsburgs, similar diplomatic openings were made towards Wallachia and Transylvania. The Porte made significant efforts to convince the former vassals to abandon the Habsburgs' camp in return of the sultan's pardon and favourable terms.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the tale related by Vergitsis is only a part of a bigger project. Yet all the negotiations failed to achieve the desired peace. Such end was probably due to the 'logic' of war. For the big actors (Habsburgs, Ottomans), the conclusion of peace was connected with the question of reputation;<sup>36</sup> each camp wanted to suggest to their subjects that the conflict ended in their favour and that the treaty was a very favourable one. As the fortunes of war fluctuated and some

33 *Ibidem*, p. 424. Barton testimony is confirmed by another contemporary eyewitness Giovanni Marco Isolano an Italian officer who fight on the Habsburgs' side. Isolano mentions that "Assam Bassa figliuolo di Memet Bassa fu lasciato dal Gran Signore partendo di Belgrado per tornare a Costantinopoli in Alba Greca per haver cura della frontiera con intentione di farlo tardar l'Anno a venire. Era questo Assam desideroso di Guerra et pero fece amazzare il secretario dell'Ambasciator di Inghilterra che tornava di Vienna con buone comissione circa la Pace" (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek mss. it. 35, f. 24r); a Hungarian translation was published by Benda Kálmán, "Giovanni Marco Isolano grof ezredes feljegyzesei a magyarországi török háborúrol, 1594–1602," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 96 (1983), pp. 651–681. An edition of the text is being prepared by Ovidiu Cristea. Hassan enmity against the Habsburgs explains why he tried to convince Sigismund Bathory to abandon the imperial camp.

34 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek mss. It. 35, f. 28r–v: "Dimandorno in questo tempo alcuni Turchi amici del Palfi che stavano in Buda di parlar di pace et venero sopra un Isoletta del Danubio ma non si venne a ristrecto alcuno."

35 Andreescu, "O pace prefăcută," pp. 119–1148.

36 See for instance the remarks of Francesco Vendramin, Venetian ambassador in Prague. The emperor, explained Vendramin, risked to lose his reputation in Germany in he would have accepted the Ottoman conditions in 1596 see the document in Tamas Kruppa, "Pasquale Bruti," doc. 6, p. 43: "Nel quel caso non potendosi mantener questi stati sicuri con tali conditioni et trattandosi di perder affatto la riputatione con tutta la Germania, credono che Sua Maesta non sia per condescender mai ad un simile partito ...". For a model of analysis in a different political and military context, see J.H. Elliott, "A Question of Reputation? Spanish Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Modern History*, 55 (1983), pp. 475–483.

key fortresses passed from one camp to another it was very difficult to find a balanced solution.

The small actors (Wallachia, Transylvania) had their own interests and objectives. For them, a separate peace between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans would have been a disaster as they were unable to resist by themselves to the sultan's military might. For the Wallachian lord, the situation was even more complicated. He had to pay close attention to the balance of power in its own realm (many boyars were in fact hostile to his anti-Ottoman policy) and also had to control an army which, from 1595 onwards, increased continuously in numbers. A sudden end of war could have transformed his mercenary troops in an unruly mass of warriors able to turn against their former master.<sup>37</sup> Thus Wallachia was like a dwarf between giants and its Prince risked to fall from Scylla to Charybdis. His doubts concerning the Ottoman good faith had some grounds. The chronicle of Balthasar Walther labels the Ottoman peace proposals as treacherous. For him the sultan decided in 1597 to submit Michael by flattery, gifts and promises. In exchange the Prince had to prove his loyalty and to follow the Ottoman army of Satirgi Mehemmed pasha in Hungary against the Habsburgs.<sup>38</sup> Later on, in July 1597, the sultan sent another emissary with even better conditions. Not only Michael was acknowledged as Wallachian ruler for life, but his son, Nicolae Pătrașcu was appointed as successor; also the tribute was cut to half and the Prince received a horse, a sword and a mace.<sup>39</sup>

This benevolent attitude was preserved even after Michael's conquest of Transylvania. An Ottoman *çavus* brought to Michael the *insignia* of power in Alba Iulia a fact which provoked some perplexity at the Rudolf II's court. The prince tried to cast away the doubts concerning his loyalty stating that it was only a stratagem to deceive the Turks.<sup>40</sup> It is difficult to verify such assertions.

37 Ovidiu Cristea, "In visceribus regni. Constrângeri logistice în timpul războiului cel lung", *Revista Istorică*, 16 (2006), pp. 141–152.

38 Dan Simonescu, "Cronica", 93: "Sed et Sultan Mehemet perfidiae propriae optime sibi conscius (...) advertens blanditiis, doniis et ampliis promisionibus eum potius in officium retinendum (...) Ideoque Hali Mazar Zaus, ut in Ungariam tum transeuntem comitur generalem militiae praefectum Saterdzi Mehemt Basscham, eiusdem nomine petit, Tatarisque alia via, intacta Walachia istuc festinare serio a Sultano injunctum significat."

39 *Ibidem*, 93.

40 Giovanni Marco Isolano, *loc. cit.*, f. 38v quoted a rumor which mentioned that "gia comincio a venir voglia a Michele d'esser Principe di quei Paesi et procurò d'haver lo stendardo da Ibraim Bassa che glie lo mandò con alcuni presenti dando sempre dall'alta parte conto di tutto a Sua Maesta aggiungendo che quello era il modo per inganare i Turchi." Balthasar Walther whose sympathy for Michael is undeniable mentioned that in 1597 the sultan send the insignia of power to Michael. The Prince accepted it because his realm needed a respite after years of war: "Anno 1597 vexillum redintegratae gratiae monumentum



It is certain though that from 1599 onwards Michael the Brave turned his attention towards other targets (Transylvania, Moldavia), his war against the infidels remaining only a rhetorical claim.<sup>41</sup>

The Ottomans had strong motives to put an end to Wallachian rebellion and after the military setback in 1595 they used diplomatic means. The revolt of 1594 not only put in jeopardy the Danube frontier but also the provisioning of Constantinople and of the troops in Upper Hungary.<sup>42</sup> In order to continue successfully the war against the Habsburgs, the Porte desperately needed peace on the Lower Danube and in the Black Sea, a very important area for the Ottoman strategy.

## 2 The Black Sea and the Ottomans—an Overview

During the 13th–15th centuries, the Black Sea was at the crossroads of the international trade routes linking Asia and Europe. The Ottoman expansion in the area challenged and replaced the Genoese and Venetian rule without provoking the disappearance of the old trade routes. For example, the ones which crossed Wallachia and Moldavia continued to function in the 16th and 17th centuries, albeit with some important differences. The Ottoman Empire played a major role in this process as the new dominant power in South-East Europe and the Black Sea region. Ottoman hegemony in the area created a system which concentrated trade routes and the flow of goods on Constantinople.<sup>43</sup> The Italian merchants, which had once dominated the region in the Later Middle Ages, were replaced by Ottoman subjects and other

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subiectionisque denuo promissae signum, per Zausium vel Portae commissarium mittitur, ac legitimis ceremoniis traditur. Quid enim Walachiae civitatibus et arcibus, sive palatiis potius, dirutis, quid oppidis, villisque fere omnibus toties vastatis et deletis, quid pluribus hominum abductis millibus, annuoque poenu dudum consumto, aliud ad reficiendos super stites incolas faciat?" (Dan Simonescu, "Cronica", p. 92).

41 Ovidiu Cristea, "A Second front: Wallachia and the 'Long War' against the Turks", in *Europe and Ottoman World: Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)*, eds. Gábor Kárman and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013), pp. 13–27.

42 For the debate concerning the impact of the Wallachian and Moldavian revolt on the provisioning of the Ottoman capital, see Bogdan Murgescu, "Did Moldavia and Wallachia export Grains during the 16th century?", in *Miscellanea in honorem Radu Manolescu emerito*, eds. Zoe Petre and Stelian Brezeanu (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 1996), pp. 190–199; a different opinion was expressed by Ștefan Andreescu, "Răscoala Țărilor Române din 1594 și chestiunea aprovizionării Constantinopolului," *Revista Istorică*, 8 (1997), pp. 591–614.

43 See, for instance, the allegation made in 1596 by the Venetian Leonardo Donà on the provinces around the Black Sea: "Tutte si puo dire che servano al commodo di quella gran

merchants from East-Central Europe, but the change in actors did not lead to any great changes neither in the nature of goods bought and sold, nor in the volumes traded. Thus, we should not be surprised that both the 'Wallachian road', which linked the Black Sea with Central Europe via Transylvania and 'Moldavian road' which connected the mouth of the Danube with Southern Poland continued to function. Moreover, in the late sixteenth century there were even signs that both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the area were becoming interested in the Black Sea region's trade potential once more.<sup>44</sup>

In 1591, for instance, the Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople, Lorenzo Bernardo, informed his superiors of a project suggested by Krzysztof Dzierzek, the Polish ambassador at the Porte, who had argued the necessity of building up a permanent Polish-Venetian fleet in the Black Sea. According to this plan, two or three ships were necessary to bring from the mouths of the Dniester grain, honey, wax, meat and hides and to transport them towards West. Although sceptical that such a proposal was realistic and suspecting that the Porte would do everything it could to oppose it, the *bailo* nevertheless passed on the suggestion to his superiors.<sup>45</sup> Even if the project led to nothing, it reflects the importance of the route linking the Kingdom of Poland to the Black Sea and reveals Poland's wish to restore trade to the route by appealing to the maritime power which had been one of the most important actors in the Black Sea trade in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

Clearly, we must take care to distinguish between such projections and the realities of trade at the time,<sup>46</sup> but even so the documents show that there was at least theoretical interest in reviving trade between the West and the Black Sea region. Quantitative analysis of the number of shipments and amount of goods along the 'Wallachian road' and 'Moldavian road' might offer us a more

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città (i.e. Constantinople)"; *Relazioni di ambasciatori veneti al Senato tratte dalle migliori edizioni disponibili e ordinate cronologicamente* XIII, ed. Luigi Firpo (Turin, 1984), p. 350.

44 Ștefan Andreescu, "Comerțul danubiano-pontic la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea: Mihai Viteazul și drumul moldovenesc," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 15 (1997), pp. 41–60; Ovidiu Cristea, "Michael the Brave, the Long War and the Moldavian Road," *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes*, 51 (2013), pp. 239–253.

45 And alternate project to established a Venetian-Polish regular trade was proposed by Pietro Duodo who plead for a land route connecting Venice and Krakow via Bolzano, Innsbruck, and Vienna; Cristea, "Michael the Brave, the Long War and the Moldavian Road," p. 241.

46 Another project envisaged the creation of a commercial link between Transylvania and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. See the documents published by Andrei Oțetea, "Știri italiene pivitoare la Țările Românești," *Cercetări istorice*, 4 (1928), pp. 62–65 (n<sup>o</sup>. 5).

differentiated picture, but in the absence of customs records we must turn to other sources to form an image of trade along this route.<sup>47</sup>

A letter of Polish King Sigismund III Wasa to Sultan Murād III, dating from the beginning of the Long War, asks that there should be no increase in the taxes paid by merchants from either realm. At the same time, the Polish king stresses the importance of guaranteeing safety on the roads, and states that the normal flow of trade depends upon the certainty that goods and persons may travel unharmed. The letter recommends that merchants should avoid forbidden routes, an allusion to the side-roads that sought to evade customs stations. Such mention suggests that those who ventured on such roads may be punished.<sup>48</sup> The letter, preserved in a Venetian copy, is significant since it reveals an interest in the good functioning of the trade route across Moldavia, and equally shows that there were problems which beset the normal run of things. A similar letter from March or June of the same year (1593) sent by the Sultan to the Polish king points to the Cossack attacks in the Black Sea area. The sultan writes that 'Several brigands from among your Poles and the Cossacks subjects gathered and came into our lands that border upon yours, where they plundered and burned the villages and towns, taking more than a thousand prisoners. As well as this, they fell upon our town, the port called Tulcea, where they killed our customs officer and twelve janissaries with him, taking three bags of our coin from the customs house, 4,500 thalers.' The Sultan saw these deeds as a clear violation of the peace, especially since in his letter he accuses the king of treating the law-breakers mildly: 'You have not punished them and you have taken no action to stop them from doing harm in our lands.'<sup>49</sup>

The smooth flow of trade continued to be problematic for relations between Poland and the Ottoman Empire after 1593 as well. Thus, in 1597, the Polish ambassador in Istanbul, Stanislaw Gulski, received instructions to ask that 'the Emperor (= Sultan) should place good men, Christians whom he trusts, who may mediate friendship between us and *keep the roads open and safe for envoys and for merchants*' (our emphasis).<sup>50</sup> Gulski was also charged with asking that

47 For Transylvania, such customs records were preserved, but the documents raise some serious challenges. Mária Pakucs, *Sibiu-Hermannstadt. Oriental Trade in Sixteenth Century Transylvania*, (Köln-Weimar-Wien, 2007), p. 127 remarks that in 1593 the quantity of Oriental goods passing through Sibiu customs doubled. However, the author points out the risks of drawing too firm conclusions.

48 Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești IV* (Bucharest, 1932), 4 sqq.

49 Ilie Corfus (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea*, (Bucharest, 1979), p. 371.

50 Corfus, *Documente*, p. 371.

Poles rather than Tatars should be stationed at Tighina and Akkerman, 'since when they are in place the Sultan will draw more income from trade between Poland and the Ottomans'. The same concern for trade is revealed in negotiations about the town of Ismail, which the prince of Moldavia, Aron 'the Tyrant', destroyed at the start of the Long War. The Polish envoy was instructed to ask that Ismail be returned to Moldavia, along with the surrounding land and its inhabitants. Otherwise, refugees around Ismail 'would continue to prey upon merchants and cause harm in Moldavia'.<sup>51</sup> Certainly, this document represents only the Polish point of view, and the kingdom's attempt to consolidate the Polish influence in Moldavia in 1595. In 1597 the Porte ignored the Polish requests, and the Sultan's reply insisted that these territories had been in Muslim hands for a long time. Nevertheless, Mehemmed III's letter repeats the main themes of maintaining friendship with Sigismund III Wasa and punishing law-breakers.<sup>52</sup> Finally, in 1598, the list of requests which the Polish envoy Jan Felix Herburt was instructed to present to the Porte included the requirement that the Polish merchants accompanying ambassadors sent to the Ottoman Empire should not have to pay customs duties, and that those who had collected these dues should return the money.

These projects, plans and negotiations were all meant to ensure good order on the trade route. One may ask though how frequent and profitable was the traffic on the commercial routes in the Black Sea area. Fortunately along with some custom register which were studied by scholars<sup>53</sup> there is a valuable source which illustrates the perspective of a merchant who frequently travelled between Lviv and Constantinople. The journal of Martin Grüneweg offers many details about routes, the goods transported, the coinage in use and customs taxes and other details. Grüneweg also warns about dangers on the road ('Since there are many spies everywhere, especially in Wallachia ... you are not safe in any part'), and also explains how merchants were able to adapt to all sort of situations. For example, in 1582 a caravan made its way along the Bessarabian bank of the river Prut since the ford had been washed away by floods. The next year, the presence of a large number of troops near Kamenets-Podolsk led merchants to choose a detour, while in 1584, on the way back from

51 Ilie Corfus, "Intervenția polonă în Moldova și consecințele ei asupra războiului lui Mihai Viteazul cu turcii," *Revista de Istorie*, 28 (1975), pp. 533–534.

52 P.P. Panaitescu (ed.), *Documente privitoare la istoria lui Mihai Viteazul* (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Carol I, 1936), pp. 35–36.

53 Pakucs-Willcocks, *Sibiu-Hermannstadt*, passim.

Istanbul to Poland, they chose to cross Wallachia from Floci to Râmnicul Sărat and onward via Focșani–Tecuci–Bârlad–Vaslui to avoid Ottoman forces.<sup>54</sup>

All these sources support the idea that there was an interest in good order on the Wallachian and Moldavian roads at the end of the sixteenth century. The latter one was, at the time, more affected by the attacks launched by Cossacks, Tatars and Moldavians. A report from 1590 of Venetian *bailo* Lorenzo Bernardo mentions that, due to Cossack raids into Ottoman territory, the Polish-Ottoman relations were very tense (*pace ... molto sospetta e turbata*).<sup>55</sup> The *bailo's* account deserves attention for the details he offers as well as for the accuracy of his observations. He emphasizes that although they were theoretically Polish subjects, the Cossacks were impossible to keep under control as their bands were made up of outlaws of varying origins. Bernardo compares them to the *uskoks* of Adriatic, and this comparison indicates the main problem in combating this scourge. The Cossacks, like the *uskoks*, launched quick raids and then retreated before their victims could respond. They were not tied down to any particular territory where they could be tracked down and punished, so that the only meaningful response was similar Tatar raids into Polish territory.<sup>56</sup>

A year later, the Polish chancellor considered an attack on Moldavia by the Dniepr Cossacks a critical event which could cause new tensions in relations with the Ottoman Empire. The raid struck the Moldavian town of Iurghiov, not far from Akkerman and Tighina, and a number of Ottoman subjects were among the victims. Substantial plunder was taken, and in a letter to the bishop of Kujawy, Hieronim Doliwa Rozrazewski, Jan Zamoyski expresses concern that the Sultan may see the attack as a *casus belli*. In an attempt to disown Polish responsibility for the attacks, the chancellor sought to win the Moldavian prince's goodwill using an argument which is also underlined in Lorenzo Bernardo's report. The outlaws were not Polish subjects, but a mixture of brigands of varying origins (Poles, Muscovites, Moldavians, Tatars) who 'having nothing with which to feed themselves and their wives and children (...) go out into the wilderness, and attack not just the neighbouring states but

54 Alexandru Ciociltan, "Martin Grüneweg prin Moldova, Țara Românească și Dobrogea," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, 27 (2009), pp. 209–248.

55 *Relazioni di Ambasciatori veneti al Senato* XIV, 372. Another interesting viewpoint belongs to Lazaro Soranzo, *L'Ottomano* (Naples, 1600), pp. 97–98.

56 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lituanian. International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15–18 century). A Study of Peace Treaties followed by annotated documents*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 109; Andrei Pippidi, "Cazacii navigatori, Moldova și Marea Neagră la începutul secolului al XVII-lea," in *Marea Neagră. Puteri maritime—puteri terestre (sec. XIII–XVIII)*, ed. Ovidiu Cristea (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006), pp. 266–273.

also cause harm and loss in the lands of the Crown.<sup>57</sup> We do not know how far the Moldavian lord, Aron ‘the Tyrant’, accepted the Polish explanations. It seems likely that he ordered reprisals against neighbouring parts of the kingdom, since on 2nd February 1594 the nobles of Podolia asked Zamoyski to take steps against raids from Moldavia which had the prince’s tacit approval.<sup>58</sup> It seemed that there would be no end to this series of raids and counter-raids which included incursions into border estates as well as robbery of merchants.

In the case of the Cossacks, towards of the beginning of the 17th century, we can observe a change of direction toward the Western shores of the Black Sea with the intent of capturing shipping and merchants set sail from the mouths of the Danube for the Ottoman capital. Such raids led to protest from the Porte in 1613 in an episode which was far from unique. When a similar raid hit Varna in 1620, a certain Italian merchant Marco di Giovanni was among the victims; all his wares were seized and even his life was put in danger.<sup>59</sup>

### 3 A War, a Sensitive Front and a Quest for a Diplomatic Solution

This captures, in our opinion, the state of trade in the Black Sea area at the end of the 16th century and underlines the main actors’ efforts to strengthen the security of trade routes. Despite some measures undertaken by the political rulers, the period corresponds to an increased frequency of the attacks against the merchants and their goods. The outbreak of the Long War against the Ottoman Empire worsened the situation. While the main military effort of both Habsburgs and Ottomans focused on Hungary, the revolt of Wallachia and Moldavia at the end of 1594 opened a new front which put in danger the Black Sea area and the strategic role played by the Danube for the war in Hungary. The military pressure exercised all along the Danube frontier by the army of Michael ‘the Brave’, between 1595 and 1598, as well as by the Moldavian army until mid-1595, put in jeopardy not only the lines of operations between the Ottoman troops in Upper Hungary and the Balkan provinces of the empire, but also the provisioning of Constantinople.

The gravity of the challenge is mirrored by the quick reaction of the Porte. After several unsuccessful attempts to remove the Wallachian and Moldavian princes in the winter of 1594/1595, the grand vizier Sinan Pasha launched a massive attack in the summer 1595, with the intention to transform both

57 Corfus, *Documente*, p. 376.

58 Ibid. pp. 376–378.

59 Pippidi, “Cazacii navigatori”, pp. 273–274, 279.

principalities in Ottoman provinces.<sup>60</sup> However, the results were far from the expectations. In Wallachia, after an inconclusive battle at Călugăreni (13/23 August 1595), the Ottomans occupied the main cities of Bucharest and Târgoviște but eventually were forced to retreat under the pressure of a Christian army composed of Transylvanian, Wallachian, and 'Western' units.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, in Moldavia the Porte proved more successful as a new prince, Jeremiah Moghila, who was favourable to a peaceful settlement, had gained the throne with Polish support.<sup>62</sup> But despite such indirect success the main problem—the control of the Danube—remained unresolved for the Ottomans.

Therefore, the aforementioned fragment of the Cretan chronicle and the secret reports of the Venetian *bailo* share some interesting insights on the strategy adopted by the Porte after the failure of 1595. While on the short term the setback was balanced by the victory of Mezőkeresztes in 1596, on the middle and long run Wallachia remained a serious issue to be dealt with. The Ottomans chose to avoid any major clash against the Wallachian prince, but such cautious approach was not enough. After 1595, not only the Porte has changed its strategy, but also did their enemy. Michael 'the Brave' launched several attacks against the Ottoman fortresses in the Black Sea and the Danube area which culminated with the destruction of Vidin and Nicopolis, as well as with the defeat of an Ottoman army led by Hafiz Ahmed Pasha.<sup>63</sup> Confronted to a threat which complicated the military situation in Upper Hungary the Porte tried to use all the diplomatic tools at its disposal in order to put an end to the Danube front.

As one of the most prominent leaders of the Greek Christian community of the Empire, Meletios Pigas was asked to mediate the peace. Representative of a faction advocating peaceful cohabitation with the Ottomans, the patriarch accepted the task: unlike war-adepts such as Dionsysios Ralli and others, he did not see Michael 'the Brave' as a potential liberator of Constantinople and a restorer of the Byzantine Empire. According to Vergitsis, he failed—the

60 Mihai Maxim, "Voyvodalik ou beglerbegilik? La politique ottomane envers la Moldavie et la Valachie (novembre 1594–février 1596) à la lumière des nouveaux documents turcs," in Maxim, *Romano-Ottomanica. Essays and Documents from the Turkish Archives* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2001), pp. 163–173.

61 Andrei Veress, "Campania creștinilor în contra lui Sinan pașa din 1595," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii istorice* (3rd series) (1925), pp. 33–75.

62 Corfus, "Intervenția polonă," pp. 527–540.

63 Aurel Decei, "Răsunătoarea acțiune a lui Mihai Viteazul la sud de Dunăre în septembrie-octombrie 1598 înfățișată de cronicile turcești," in *Mihai Viteazul. Culegere de studii*, eds. Paul Cernovodeanu and Constantin Rezachevici (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 163–178; also Aurel Decei, "Relațiile lui Mihai Viteazul cu Imperiul Otoman," in Decei, *Relații româno-orientale. Culegere de studii* (Bucharest: Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978), pp. 223–245.

Wallachian rebel broke the truce just a couple of days after he signed it. In reality, after Pigas's intervention, Michael ceased to be a real threat for the Ottoman well-protected domains. From 1599 onwards the prince directed his war efforts towards Transylvania and Moldavia. It was more profitable, all the more so as main representatives of the Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire were rather reluctant in supporting him.

Until now, the subject was treated from a 'separate' point of view: of the Ottomans, of Michael 'the Brave', of the Habsburgs. Vergitsis's History suggests a better perspective—that of connected history. Considered together, the decision of Damat Ibrahim Paşa to involve Pigas, the patriarch's diplomatic activity, and the Wallachian reaction—each one with its own rationale—are in fact parts of the same puzzle.

**Appendix: Venice—*Biblioteca Marciana*, Marc. Ital. XI—184 (7414), ff. 75r–77v (*Del'Historia del Regno di Candia—Libro XVII*)**

[75r] Meletio Pigano candiotto, Patriarcha Alessandrino, huomo in ogni maniera di letteratura greca, latina e thoscano pienamente versato et severo im(m)itator di quegli antichi Paoli, Antonij et Ilarioni, con gli altri lucidissimi lumi della vita monastica, ritrovandosi in Constantinopoli per negotij della || [75v] Chiesa sua, fù in questi tempi, à preghi di Prelati et à voce del popolo, assunto à quella sede suprema. Il qual luogo accetto egli volentieri, con tutto che ci sia di travagli et facende d'importanza ripieno, et però molto contrario al genio et vita sua ritirata nella Chiesa di Alessandria, la qual, essendo poverissima di diocese, conviene molto à pensieri e studij suoi santissimi. Ma con conditione, che si lasciò intender liberamente, fino à tanto, che altri si ritrovi, il quale tanta carica accettar volesse: delche dotta, et prudentissima lettera tenemo noi di mano stessa di questo santo huomo dalla vita, e dottrina sacrata del quale sperar vi puo il mondo securamente l'antica et perpetua unione delle Chiese sagratissime, Greca et Romana. Le quali, ancor che con gli effetti sieno una cosa medesima, per la trascuraggine non dimeno, per non dir ignoranza, d'alcuni pochi, et del'una, et del'altra parte; paiono altrui separate. Questo afferma altresì et Girolamo Capelli, di presente Bailo in Constantinopoli per la Republica venetiana, letteratissimo et prudentissimo Senatore, il quale, conosciuta la vita et dottrina catholica del Patriarcha, usa la pratica sua con molto stretti et domestici termini di perfetta amicitia. À questo lucidissimo Sole Orientale vi si aggiungono quei duo || [76r] lumi della Chiesa Greca, Gabrielle Seviro, Arcivescovo della Filadelfia, grave, prudente et dottissimo Prelato, et il già detto vescovo Margunio, i quali et duo per l'innocenza della vita et per la dottrina loro catholica vivono molto cari et premiati honestamente appresso la Republica venetiana, facendo volar i nomi loro fuori anco da' termini della Italia, con chiaro et perpetuo grido della



virtù loro. Non passò molto di tempo, che'l Patriarcha Meletio, con quei spiriti santissimi dell'animo suo che è solito fare per se stesso, attendendo alla riforma de' costumi et vita licentiosa de' Prelati et Clero tuto in Constantinopoli: fù cagione, che la maggior parte di loro cominciasse à odiarlo mortalmente. Come coloro à cui piace molto piu la libera et larga vita in questo mondo, che la stretta et angusta, insegnataci da' santi Padri nella Chiesa di Christo redentor nostro, per la beatitudine eterna de' Cieli. Et per piu facilmente levarselo dinanzi, accusarono lui al Sig(no)r de' Turchi di poter molto co' nemici del suo Imperio et partocolarm(en)te di tener amicitia strettissima co'l Prencipe Michele, deto de' suoi Banno Michali, il quale prima solo travagliato haveva molto lo Stato turchesco et congiunto h'ora con l'arme del Transilvano, guerreggia tuttavia con senno et valore militar' || [76v] segnalato contra Turchi et sempre con danno gravissimo delle cose loro, dandogli però à creder, che cio che il Patriarcha saprà chieder à detto Prencipe, l'ottiene senza altro da lui, tanta riverenza e tanta devotione porta egli à quel' huomo, come à capo superiore del ritto et religione sua. Mosso dunque il Gran Signore à queste accuse maligne, fece andar alla presenza sua il Patriarcha, a cui scoprendo egli l'amicitia domestica che tiene co'l Prencipe Michele, com(m)andò lui che scriver gli dovesse di tregua per qualche tempo con lui. Non si perdi nulla il Patriarcha al'aspetto formidabile d'un tanto Signore, anzi intrepidamente rispose à lui, essere verissimo tener lui amicitia con quel Prencipe, il quale, come christiano, gliene rende ubidienza et egli, come capo suo spirituale l'abbraccia et lo raccogli caramente, ma delle cose della guerra e de' Stati temporali, non toccava à lui di trattar': massime con un' Capitano, che tuttavia armato con l'essercito se ne stava in campagna. Sapendo tanto più che gli huomini de guerra in simili occasioni rare volte, ò non mai osservano la fede, che data havessero altrui. Aggiunse à queste et altre molte et vive ragioni, che'l tempo et l'occasione somministrare havevano à quel divinissimo spirito, per rimover l'animo superbo di quel barbaro da questo nuovo || [77r] pensiero. Ma in vano, che egli non accettò sua scusa: con tutto che ella fosse stata et fondata et ispiegata co' termini della pura et semplice verità, perche fù egli necessitato finalmente in presenza sua, come fece, di scriver à quel Prencipe, quanto egli comandata l'haveva dintorno alla tregua. Rescrisse il Prencipe gratiosamente al Patriarcha, promettendogli la tregua ne' termini, che ricercata gli l'haveva sparsa questa buona fama, s'assicurò per molti giorni l'essercito Turchesco di viver senza pensier di combatter. Ma il Prencipe, che haveva altro pensiero di quello scrisse al Patriarcha: come astutissimo soldato, che questa è la propria natura sua, fece poco d'òpo dar l'assalto sprovedutamente al'essercito del Turco, il quale, ritrovatolo disordinato per la fama della tregua, ruppe e taglio à pezzi la maggior parte di esso, con acquisto grandissimo de' schiavi et preda ricchissima di danari et altre cose militari. À questa nouva strepitò molto il Turco contra il Patriarcha, tenendo anzi per constane, che sotto mano per altra via scritto havesse egli al Prencipe il contrario, perche infiammatosi d'ira crudele, ricercò d'haver nelle mani quel santo huomo. Mà Iddio Nostro Salvator che salva miracolosamente sempre gli innocenti

dalla furia de' Tirrani fece si che avisato di cio il Patriarcha tacitamente di subito si levò da Constantinopoli, navigando || [77v] al'Isola di Patmo, ove nel'antichissimo monastero di S. Giova(n)ni Evangelista fermatosi per qualche mese e tanto che cessarono detti tumulti, finalmente si condusse egli alla Chiesa sua Alessandrina, nella quale gode tuttavia i soavi, et santissimi frutti dell vita sua solitaria.

Questo racconto del Patriarcha, ancor che paia fuori del'intentione nostra in questa storia, che è di trattar le cose Candiene particolarmente, egli conviene non dimeno per essere il successo avvenuto in una persona Candiotta et illustre. Tenendo noi cortese et particolar obbligo alla patria nostra di sempre far mentione, secondo l'occorenze, degli huomini suoi di chiaro et honorato grido degni et se ben anco si ritrovassero habitar altri paesi.

# Entangled Histories, Entangled Chancelleries? Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate between *Pax Mongolica* and *Pax Ottomanica*

*Michał Wasiucionek*

## 1 Introduction

By 1686, the Ottoman Empire's military fortunes seemed to have reached their nadir. Although the imperial forces were able to fend off Polish-Lithuanian challenge in Moldavia, they suffered major reversals on all the other fronts. In Morea, the Venetians managed to entrench their positions and achieve significant gains; in Hungary, Habsburg armies succeeded in capturing Buda and advanced far into the Ottoman territory. Finally, the Russian authorities decided to join the war, exposing the empire's eastern flank. It is under these critical circumstances that a curious case of miscommunication took place. In a letter addressed to Transylvanian prince Mihály Apafi I, the Crimean khan Selim I Girey (1671–1678, 1684–1691, 1692–1699 and 1702–1704) barely touched upon military matters. Instead, he complained:

despite the fact that people [at my court] know every language and read every script, they were unable to translate the contents of the letter that I had received from you (*eğerce bu tarafta her dilibilur ve her yazıtı okur-adamlar var idi lakin sizdengelen kağıtı okuyub içinde olan ahvalı tercüme eye kadir olamadılar*).<sup>1</sup>

Given the gravity of the military situation and the average speed of communication at that time, the Transylvanian prince's choice to write the letter in Hungarian could have had disastrous consequences for the Porte. Such mishaps were not uncommon in early modern Eastern Europe, which lacked a commonly utilized *lingua franca* similar to that of Latin employed in Western Europe or the triad of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Persian in the Middle East. The cacophony of languages spoken and written throughout the region had important political consequences. Some crucial documents went unread for the lack of competent staff, and crucial information was lost in translation.

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1 Direcția Arhivelor Naționale—Instituție Centrală, București, Documente turcești, 2349.

While this particular mishap is fascinating in its own right, equally interesting are Selim Girey's assertions regarding the skill of his chancery staff. Although one may be tempted to interpret khan's claims as an attempt to save face and shift the blame for the embarrassing situation on Apafi, this was no empty boast. Throughout the early modern period, the rulers in Bahçesaray maintained a chancellery remarkable for its versatility and impressive skillset that allowed it to handle correspondence in a variety of scripts and languages and produce documents in no less than four different scripts. As Dariusz Kołodziejczyk noted, the multilingual chancellery "demonstrated the political pragmatism of the Crimean court and the fluency of the Crimean chancery in various cultural spheres."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, this cosmopolitan approach was a point of pride for the Gireys and represented a continuation of the multilingual approach to diplomacies that had been employed by the Golden Horde and the Mongol Empire. Although the Crimean khans did not aspire to universal sovereignty in the manner their Chinggisid ascendants had done, the ability of their scribes not only facilitated communication but also enhanced their dynastic pride and political prestige.

The Gireys were not the only ones to subscribe to this model of chancery practice; so did their western neighbours, the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia. Tucked between Catholic powers of Poland and Hungary, the waning steppe power of the Golden Horde and the expanding Ottoman Empire, their very existence relied heavily on the ability to adapt to their more powerful neighbours. Thus, although the foundations of the principalities' political institutions and legitimacy drew on the models within the 'Byzantine commonwealth',<sup>3</sup> the chanceries of Moldavia and Wallachia, from their formation, were remarkably receptive to influences from non-Orthodox polities as well.<sup>4</sup> Not only were the scribes able to produce documents in multiple scripts, but also skillfully utilize rhetorical conventions and diplomatic features to their advantage.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while relying on different 'primary idioms' of document production, both Moldavian-Wallachian and Crimean chancelleries partook in cosmopolitan and multilingual culture that made them particularly important

2 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland–Lithuania: International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Centuries): A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 240.

3 For the concept of the 'Byzantine commonwealth', see Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

4 Nicolae Gramadă, "Cancelaria domnească în Moldova până la domnia lui Constantin Mavrocordat," *Codrul Cosminului*, 9 (1935), pp. 185–87.

5 On this topic, see particularly Marian Coman, *Putere și teritoriu: Țara Românească medievală (secolele XIV–XVI)* (Iași: Polirom, 2013).

sites for potential cross-fertilization between different practices and models. As Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate entered Ottoman orbit and its ties with the imperial centre and sultan's chancellery intensified from the fifteenth century onwards, altering both the geopolitical standing of both polities, but also their chancellery practices. As such, both Moldavian and Crimean chancelleries constituted prime cases of the transition from *Pax Mongolica* towards *Pax Ottomanica*.

Although the Ottomans emerged from a similarly heterogeneous and multilingual environment of western Anatolia,<sup>6</sup> and early on maintained a multilingual chancery, their rise to the status of global empire brought a major departure in this respect. Particularly during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520–1566), the emergence of Ottoman identity and the corresponding development of the empire's cultural and visual idiom changed the character of the imperial chancellery. By the end of the sixteenth century, both Ottoman Turkish language and chancery practices at the Porte reached their maturity, shifting towards monolingualism. Given the Porte's political hegemony of the Porte across the 'well-protected domains', this necessarily changed the parameters in which Moldavian and Crimean chancelleries operated. The ways in which they responded to these geopolitical and cultural shifts constitutes the main scope of the present study.

The most important obstacle in investigating Moldavian and—particularly—Crimean chancery culture is the dearth of sources. The tumultuous history of the region has proven most unkind to medieval and early modern archival collections. The destruction of the khans' palace in Bahçesaray by Field Marshal Münnich's troops in 1736 deprived us of a bulk of Crimean documents, while many more have been lost since.<sup>7</sup> While extant Moldavian documents are more numerous, the voivodal archives were repeatedly destroyed by fires (most importantly in 1691 and 1827), while some documents were lost or literary rotted away in the ground.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the number of internal documents has been severely depleted, while the correspondence between khans and voivodes is

6 Linda T. Darling, "Ottoman Turkish: written language and scribal practice, 13th to 20th centuries," in eds. Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway, *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 176.

7 On the even scarcer corpus of Jochid documents, see Mirkasim A. Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty Džučieva ulusa XIV–XVI vv.* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo Kazanskogo Universiteta, 1979), pp. 72–84.

8 On this topic, see Virgil Apostolescu, "Distrugearea de arhive în 'focul cea mare' de la Iași din 1827", in *Arhivele Statului—125 ani de activitate, 1831–1956* (Bucharest, 1957), 247–57; Apostolescu, "Mărturii documentare privind distrugerile și înstrăinările de materiale arhiviste în Moldova până în secolul XVIII", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie 'A.D. Xenopol'* 16 (1979), pp. 325–43.

lost almost in its entirety. However, by scavenging through extant material, we may nonetheless identify the response to the growth of the Ottoman power and cultural impact played out in Moldavian and Crimean chanceries.

In order to do so, the present study is divided into three sections. In the first part, I shall present briefly the historical trajectories of Moldavian, Crimean and Ottoman chanceries, focusing on their position within the chancery traditions throughout the region. As I argue, despite possessing what we may call 'primary idiom of diplomatics', the chancelleries constituted loci that accommodated multifaceted discourses and skillsets of their scribes, providing a fertile ground for hybridization and transculturation between traditions of diplomatics. In the second part, I examine how Crimean and Moldavian chanceries responded to the intensity of correspondence with Ottoman authorities. As I argue, the balance of power between the Porte and its tributaries led the latter to emulate imperial models developed at that time, while at the same time trying to negotiate their position within the imperial *oikumene*. This way, the correspondence with the Porte can be interpreted as a 'contact zone', "where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."<sup>9</sup> In this endeavour, Crimean and Moldavian rulers were supported by pre-existing traditions of multilingual diplomatics, facilitating the maintenance of multiple diplomatic models and discourses. However, this multiplicity of discourses by no means implies compartmentalization and lack of communication between them. On the contrary, practices and conventions drawn from the Ottoman chancery idiom 'spilt' beyond the realm of Crimean and Moldavian correspondence with the imperial centre, as it was selectively incorporated into internal documents and correspondence with other courts.

## 2 Chancellery, Authority and Calligraphic Pluralism

Although Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate emerged as distinct polities in the second half of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, their chancelleries tapped into pre-existing traditions of document production. Hence, in order to understand their response to the proliferation of Ottoman idiom of diplomatics, it is necessary to retrace their development, focusing on their primary

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9 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 4.

models—Jochid and post-Byzantine, respectively—as well as the multilingual and cross-cultural ways in which they operated on the eve of Ottoman advent.

This link with the past was particularly tangible in the Crimean case. Gireys' genealogical descent from Chinggis Khan conferred them enormous symbolic capital and dynastic charisma that legitimized their title and continued rule. The role of the khans' dynastic pedigree was recognized beyond the realm of steppe political culture; it accounted the special position they enjoyed vis-à-vis the Porte and even led to speculation over the possibility of Gireys succeeding the Ottoman dynasty in the event the latter died out.<sup>10</sup> Given the influence the dynastic legitimacy and Mongol-Jochid models of statecraft played in shaping the political culture of the Crimean Khanate, the chancellery practices of the khans' chancellery should be understood as part of a long continuum, going back to the founder of the Mongol Empire.

The rise of Mongol chancery tradition is inextricably linked to the conquests of Chinggis Khan and his immediate successors. The rapid expansion of the polity in this period created an urgent need for the establishment of new institutions and practices of governance, particularly with regard to the sedentary populations that came under the *qaghans'* rule. According to the fourteenth-century dynastic history *Yuan Shi*, following his victory over the Naymans, the *qaghan* took captive a certain *Ta-ta Tun-a*, an Uighur who had served the vanquished ruler as the keeper of the seal. Brought into the presence of the ruler, he explained his duties and the role of the seal itself: "it was used as a proof in all sorts of matters when taxes were collected and people were appointed to offices."<sup>11</sup> Chinggis Khan further inquired about the Uighur's linguistic and literary skills and subsequently included him into the ranks of his guard (*keshig*)—the administrative core of the emergent world empire. The incorporation of Uighur literary tradition into the fledging imperial project laid the groundwork for the emergence of Mongol chancellery tradition. Uighur language became the primary medium for drafting documents, while the script was adopted to produce texts in Mongolian.<sup>12</sup> In consequence,

10 On this episode, see Feridun Emecen, "Osmanlı Hanedanına Alternatif Arayışlar: İbrahimhanzadeler Örneği", in *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 4–8 Ekim 1999*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), pp. 1877–86. On the role of Gireys' Chinggisid pedigree, see Alan W. Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), p. 13.

11 *Men-da bej-lu* ("Polnoe opisanie mongolo-tatar"), translated by I.C. Mukujeva (Moscow, 1975), pp. 125–6.

12 An attempt to replace the Uighur script for Mongolian was undertaken under Khubilai Khan in 1269, resulting in what is known as "Phags-pa" or "Mongolian square script." The new writing system was meant to provide a better fit for Mongolian phonetics, while at the same time constituted a centralizing attempt meant to accommodate all languages of

Uighurs came to comprise the bulk of scribal staff and provided the blueprint for the empire's diplomatics.

While the position of Uighur as the official language of the empire was thus solidified, it was by no means exclusive. Early on, the *qaghans* began to recruit local administrative and scribal talent from newly conquered lands, such as Khwarazm, Iran and China. Coming from different corners of the empire, they brought their respective linguistic skills and chancellery tradition, now harnessed in the Mongol imperial project. This movement of scribes across the empire quickly transformed chancellery into a cosmopolitan, polyglot social milieu, facilitating exchange and hybridization.<sup>13</sup> The spread of this culture beyond the *qaghans* entourage was further facilitated by the principle of collective rule and the distribution of appanages throughout the empire.<sup>14</sup> Even after the unified empire fragmented, the exchanges between particular *uluses* continued, as was the case of Ilkhanate Iran and Yüan China.<sup>15</sup> This process by no means was smooth and uncontested. Representatives of respective traditions frequently loathed officials coming from other backgrounds, seeing them as a potential threat to their own careers and to the conventions to which they conformed. Nonetheless, this trend was by no means universal and found numerous enthusiasts, most notably Rashid al-Din.<sup>16</sup>

While the polyglot character of Mongol chancellery was largely driven by the practical necessities of governing the vast empire and maintaining contact with the world beyond,<sup>17</sup> it also carried a considerable ideological charge. Mastery of multiple diplomatic conventions and languages put on display the great number of peoples inhabiting the realms of the *qaghans* and emphasized

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the Khubilai's domains. While it remained an official script of the Yüan China, it failed to get much traction and was not applied in Western Eurasia, see Lenar F. Abzalov, *Xanskije piscy: iz istorii stanovlenija i razvitija kanceljarskoj služby xanov Zolotoj Ordy* (Kazan: Izdatel'stvo "JaZ", 2011), p. 32; Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 83–4.

13 Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley and London: Univ. of California Press, 1987), pp. 94–9.

14 Ibid., p. 118; Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 45–7.

15 Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, passim.

16 Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 84. See also Devin DeWeese, "Cultural transmission and exchange in the Mongol Empire: notes from the biographical dictionary of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī", in Linda Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 24.

17 Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, pp. 97–99.



their claim to universal sovereignty as possessors of the mandate of Heaven.<sup>18</sup> Facing the challenge of demonstrating the awesome extent of their domains, Chinggisids mobilized the symbolic resources embedded in the existing traditions and harnessed them for their dynastic purposes. To speak and write in many languages was, thus, a sign of the Mongols' ambitions and a matter of prestige. When the unified empire fragmented following the death of Möngke in 1259, this polyglot and cosmopolitan tradition was carried over by the rulers of individual *uluses*, although different context in which they operated affected the output of their respective chancelleries.<sup>19</sup> This inevitably led to a growing divergence between linguistic and scribal norms, despite the continued existence of pan-Chinggisid models.

In comparison with the scribal service of the Ilkhanate and Yuan China, the approach dominant in the Golden Horde remained relatively conservative, although by no means static. As Roman Počekajev and Lenar Abzalov point out, in the *ulus* of Jochi officialdom never evolved into a fully-fledged and socially distinctive bureaucracy.<sup>20</sup> As they point out, in comparison with its more formidable counterparts, the Jochid chancellery remained institutionally underdeveloped and suffered from the lack of local bureaucratic blueprints. As a result, its documentary output seems more in line with steppe tradition, similar to that of the Chagatid *ulus* rather than more sophisticated chanceries of China and Iran. Still, the extant evidence clearly shows the Golden Horde's sophistication in terms of diplomatics, considerable dynamism, and sustained a commitment to multilingualism.

The number of Uighur- and Mongol-speakers in the *ulus* of Jochi seems to have been small from the outset and the processes of Islamization and led to the gradual disappearance of Mongol language as the medium of written communication by the mid-fourteenth century in favour of Khwarezmian Turkic.<sup>21</sup> However, documents at least some continued to be produced in Uighur script, as it retained its prestige, co-existing along with documents composed in Arabic script.<sup>22</sup> This is the case for arguably the best-known original document

18 Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chinggis Khan's Empire," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 7 (1973), pp. 21–36; Michael Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 32–4.

19 See Abolala Soudavar, "The Mongol legacy of Persian *farmāns*", in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 407–21.

20 Roman J. Počekajev and Lenar F. Abzalov, "Počemu činovništvo Zolotoj ordy ne stalo bjurokratej?," *Naučnyj Tatarstan*, 4 (2010), pp. 144–54; Abzalov, *Xanskie piscy*, p. 126.

21 Abzalov, *Xanskie piscy*, p. 110.

22 Abzalov, *Xanskie piscy*, p. 114.

produced by the Jochid chancellery: the 1393 *yarlık* issued by Tokhtamish to King Vladislav Jagiełło.<sup>23</sup> Scholars have pointed out that diplomas granted for Russian metropolitans and Venetian and Genoese merchants of Black Sea colonies had been originally composed in Uighur script. Similarly, marginal notes on Russian documents from the fifteenth century indicate the script continued to be sometimes employed as a prestigious writing system associated with the khan.<sup>24</sup> It operated along more practice-oriented models, including that in Khwarazmian Turkic, as well as Latin and Russian.

By the time the Crimean Khanate emerged on the historical stage, the use of Uighur script was incidental and there is no evidence that Girey khans would utilize it to issue documents. The final abandonment of the last vestiges of Uighur chancellery practice can also be associated with the tumultuous fragmentation of the Jochid *ulus* following the death of Khan Djanibek in 1357. The gradual breakup of the Golden Horde into competing khanates changed the parameters of chancellery practice. On the one hand, the fact that all successor polities aspired to reunite the *ulus* incentivized continuation of chancery practices,<sup>25</sup> while at the same time the collapse of central authority led towards growing vernacularization and regionalization of chancery language.<sup>26</sup>

23 The document, preserved in Main Archives of Old Acts [AGAD] in Warsaw, Dokumenty pergaminowe 5612, has been analyzed multiple times since mid-nineteenth century, and published several times, most recently in A. Melek Özyetgin and Ilyas Kemaloglu, *Altın Orda Hanlığına Ait Resmî Yazışmalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2017), pp. 37–41 (including a facsimile, transliteration and modern Turkish translation).

24 *Ibid.*, 112–14 This prestigious character of Uighur script and its continued use along with Arabic script is also demonstrated by an episode related by Mamluk chronicler, Badr al-Din al-Ayni (d. 1453), which bears considerable resemblance to the misunderstanding between Selim Girey and Mihály Apafi, cited at the beginning of the present study. Describing the arrival of Khan Mahmud's embassy in April 1429, the Egyptian chronicler notes: "They brought with them two letters, one in Arabic and the other in Uighur language; however, no one understood its contents and there was no one able to read the letter", in V.G. Tizengauzen (ed.), *Sbornik materialov, odnosjaščixsja k istorii Zolotoj Ordy*, vol. 1, new edition by B.E. Kumekova and A.K. Muminova (Almaty, Dajk-Press, 2005), p. 376.

25 On this topic, see Leslie Collins, "On the Alleged 'Destruction' of the Great Horde in 1502," in *Manzikert to Lepanto. The Byzantine World and the Turks, 1071–1571*, eds. Anthony Bryer and Michael Ursinus (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1991), pp. 361–99; Il'ja Zajcev, *Astraxanskoe xanstvo*, second edition (Moscow: Izdatelskaya Firma Vostočnaya Literatura, 2006); Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 9–11. The latter provocatively pointed out that "if we acknowledged the legal claims of the Gireys, we would no longer discuss the collapse of the Golden Horde at the turn of the 15th century, but its impressive survival for another three centuries, although on a diminished territory."

26 Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, pp. 10–11.

However, this did not necessarily mean that diplomatics of successor states—and particularly—the Crimean Khanate became more parochial. Indeed, given Crimea's position as a trade hub and heterogeneous population of the peninsula, early Crimean chancery practice is remarkable for its variety. While Kipchak constituted the basic means of conveying documents, there is also ample evidence that the chancery produced documents in Greek, Ruthenian, Italian and Latin.<sup>27</sup> The proximity of Genoese colonies likely enhanced this trend towards multilingualism, providing the khans with an important pool of recruitment. As scholars have pointed out, Italian played a crucial role in Crimea's contacts with Lithuanian and Polish courts and family traditions seem to have continued until the seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> This influence was not restricted to the language but also reflected on the documents that adjusted in form to the traditions of diplomatics in respective languages.<sup>29</sup>

In comparison with the Crimean Khanate, the number of extant documents produced in Moldavia is far higher,<sup>30</sup> but significant lacunae persist. For instance, the first known charter issued by the Moldavian chancellery dates from 1384<sup>31</sup>—two decades after the traditional date of the principality's establishment, and only nine fourteenth-century documents have been preserved. Moreover, given the recurring destruction of voyvodal archives, the existing corpus is heavily tilted in favour of documents from monasteries and Central European archives, most notably Transylvanian and Polish ones. These

27 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 232–37; Il'ja Zajcev, *Krymskaja istoriografičeskaja tradicija XV–XIX vekov: puti razvitija, rukopisy, teksty i istočniki* (Moscow: Vostočnaja literatura, 2009), p. 20; Józef Garbacik (ed.), *Materiały do dziejów dyplomacji polskiej z lat 1486–1516: Kodeks Zagrzebski* (Warsaw—Cracow—Wrocław, 1966), pp. 89–91.

28 Zajcev, *Krymskaja istoriografičeskaja tradicija*, p. 18; Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 18, 37–40, 48.

29 See for instance, the use of Christian *datatio* in Mengli Girey's letter to Polish King John Albert from February 1500, Garbacik (ed.), *Materiały do dziejów dyplomacji*, 91. See also *šartname* of September 1467, issued by Nurdevlet to Casimir IV, Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 534–5.

30 In her study, Mariana Goina provides the number of 2,374 charters issued until the end of the sixteenth century and additional 832 addressed to foreign courts and officials, see Mariana Goina, 'The uses of pragmatic literacy in the medieval principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia: from the state foundation to the end of the sixteenth century' (PhD diss., Central European University, 2009), 15–6 and 46. See also Matei Cazacu, 'La Chancellerie des principautés valaque et moldave (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles),' in *Kanzleiwesen und Kanzleisprachen im östlichen Europa*, ed. Christian Hannick (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna: Bohlau, 1999), pp. 91–2.

31 *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova* [hereafter: DRH.A], vol. 1, doc. 1.

limitations should be thus taken into account when discussing specific features of the early Moldavian chancellery practice.

Little is known about the structure of early Moldavian chancellery. Nonetheless, the extant evidence allows us to sketch out general features of early Moldavian chancellery as a multilingual and creative milieu, characterized by its versatility and openness to the conventions of neighbouring polities. While the basic format of internal documents stemmed from the post-Byzantine tradition of South Slavic diplomatics filtered through Wallachia, Moldavian scribes also incorporated numerous elements stemming from chancery practices originating from Poland and Hungary. This included such crucial aspects of document format as numerous elements of *intitulatio*, *promulgatio*, as well as *datatio*.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, apart from Slavonic documents utilized in charters and donations, the chancery also made ample use of Latin script and language in their contacts with foreign correspondents.<sup>33</sup>

The familiarity with Polish, Hungarian and Wallachian practices of diplomatics sparked an ongoing debate regarding the origin of scribes in early Moldavian history. While some scholars argued for considerable mobility among the scribes and suggested much of the chancery staff hailed from outside the principality, others claimed that the majority of scribes were of local origin.<sup>34</sup> From the point of view of the present study, the geographic origin of *dieci* is secondary to the wide-ranging scribal proficiency they brought to the Moldavian court. Their skillsets allowed not only to produce documents that could be read and understood at foreign courts but also permitted Moldavian rulers to employ rhetorical tools to tailor their message accordingly. Thus, far from being merely a pragmatic solution to the multiplicity of languages, script

32 For a detailed discussion of foreign influences on Moldavian diplomatic format, see Damian P. Bogdan, *Documente privind istoria României* [hereafter: DIR]: *Introducere*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1956), p. 41; N. Grămadă, "Cancelaria domnească a Moldovei," p. 148; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, ed. Ilie Popescu Teiușan, (Bucharest, 1971), p. 4.

33 Dumitru Ciurea, "Diplomatica latină în țările române," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie 'A.D. Xenopol' din Iași*, 8 (1971), passim.

34 For these discussion, see Iorga, *Istoria învățământului*, p. 4; Gheorghe Ghibănescu, *Surete și izvoade*, vol. 14 (Huși, 1925), p. xxviii; Mircea Ciobotaru, "Introducere," in Mircea Ciobotaru, Vlad Cojocaru and Gabriel Istrate (eds.), *Toponimia Moldovei în documente scrise în limbii străine* (Iași, 2004), xvi–xvii; Leon Șimanschi and Georgeta Ignat, "Constituirea cancelariei statului feudal moldovenesc (II)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie 'A.D. Xenopol' din Iași*, 10 (1973), pp. 146–48.

For the social profile of Moldavian scribes, see also Constantin Cihodaru, "Începuturile cancelariei domnești în Moldova" in *Civilizație medievală românească. Studii istorice* (Cluj-Napoca, 1985), pp. 184–94; Silviu Văcaru, "Scriitori de acte din cancelaria domnească a lui Ștefan cel Mare" in *Ștefan cel Mare: la cinci secole de la moartea sa*, eds. Petronel Zahariuc and Silviu Văcaru (Iași, 2004), pp. 93–105.

and documentary models in the region, maintaining a multilingual chancery played a key role in the voivodes' strategies of self-representation.

Unfortunately, while the hybrid character of early Moldavian chancellery practice has been noted by scholars, the role post-Chinggisid models played in its formative stages still awaits a comprehensive study. Obviously, the dearth of sources makes it an extremely difficult topic; however, there are some indications that Jochid models played an important role in shaping Moldavian institutions and political vocabulary.<sup>35</sup> In this context, the absence of evidence should not be necessarily considered evidence of absence,<sup>36</sup> and it seems quite likely that Moldavian chanceries handled some documents produced in the languages of the steppe. Thus, we are unable to determine in which language the voivodes would correspond with Crimean khans, it is important to note considerable overlap in the languages and models employed by both chanceries, including Latin and Ruthenian, as well as possibly Turkic and Greek.

This survey was meant to demonstrate that, despite adopting different traditions as the foundation of their respective practices of diplomacy, Crimean and Moldavian chanceries shared common features with respect to multilingualism and approach towards the multiplicity of document-drafting practices of Eastern Europe. By employing scribes proficient in different traditions of document production and numerous languages of the region, khans and voivodes fostered the scribal milieu that eluded simple categorizations, such as solidly post-Byzantine or Jochid. To borrow a comparison from physics,

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35 Post-Chinggisid vocabulary is likely the source for the notion of dynastic legitimacy, with the voivodes claiming descent from 'the voyvodal bone' (*os domnesc*), identical with the Mongol-Tatar notion of bone as the central symbol of genealogical descent, see Michael Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran* (Oxford and New York, 2016), p. 3; Donald Ostrowski, *Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier 1304–1589* (Cambridge–New York, 2002), p. 140; Roman J. Počekajev, "Religioznye faktory legitimacii vlasti v Zolotoj Orde a pozdnesrednovkovnyx tjurko-mongol'skix gosudarstv XV–XVIII vv.," *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie*, 1 (2013), pp. 96–109. For the possibility of such ties, see Marian Coman, "Înainte de tradiția bizantină: înscăunarea domnilor în Țara Românească medievală," unpublished study. I would like to thank Marian Coman for sharing the study and discussing the topic with me. There is also some evidence for administrative continuity between Jochid fiscal administration and patterns of landholding in eastern Moldavia, see Elena Gherman, "Un domeniu feudal din ținutul Cărligăturii" *Cercetări istorice*, new series 24–26 (2005–2007), pp. 164–166.

36 While some scholars make sweeping generalizations claiming that 'the foreign correspondence of the Moldavian princes was conducted almost exclusively in Latin' (Goina, "The uses of pragmatic literacy", 9), it is important to note that the sample we have at our disposal is heavily tilted towards regions where Latin constituted primary language of chancery, and hence the situation could differ depending on the addressee.

rather than clearly-defined solid objects of classical physics, occupying a set position in space, chancellery traditions in the region should be seen as constantly entangled and overlapping with each other, more akin to that of the quantum world. As the scribes of Kipchak, Latin, Slavonic and other languages remained in the vicinity of Crimean and Moldavian rulers, this proximity fostered a scribal 'contact zone', a fertile ground open to innovation, hybridization and cross-cultural borrowings. This multicultural tradition had an important role to play in shaping their readjustment to the rise of Ottoman power.

### 3 Writing the Sultan

The Ottoman expansion into the Black Sea region brought new challenges for the local rulers and reshaped the geopolitical context in which the Crimean and Moldavian chancelleries operated. This had much to do not only with the entry of the Crimean Khanate and the Danubian principalities into the Ottoman *oikumene* but also the changing dynamics of Ottoman chancery itself, marking its transition from the frontier principality into a global empire.

As was the case for the Black Sea region, western Anatolia provided numerous models of diplomatics for the fledging Ottoman polity, including those of Seljukid, Byzantine and Latin stock. At the early stages of their expansion, the Ottoman chancery practices readily embraced the multilingual approach and incorporated features originating from other traditions. On the linguistic level, as Linda Darling pointed out, documents produced early in the dynasty's history follow Ilkhanid and Seljukid models, but employ the idiom at a very rudimentary level; only as their domains incorporated western Anatolian cultural centres, most notably Kütahya did the idiom of diplomatics gain in refinement and prestige.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the fledging polity's expansion in the Balkans and into formerly-Byzantine lands introduced into administrative ranks numerous individuals well acquainted with pre-conquest chancery traditions, fuelling the multilingual environment that characterized Ottoman chancellery well into the fourteenth century, including documents produced in Greek, Serbian and Italian.<sup>38</sup>

37 Darling, "Ottoman Turkish," p. 176.

38 See Nicolas Vatin, "L'emploi du Grec comme langue diplomatique par les Ottomans (fin du XV<sup>e</sup>-début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle)" in F. Hitzel (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales Actes du colloque organisé par l'IFÉA et l'INALCO à l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'École des Langues Orientales, Istanbul 29-31 mai 1995* (Paris, 1995), pp. 41-47; György Hazai, "Zur Rolle des Serbischen im Verkehr des Osmanischen Reiches mit Osteuropa im 15-16 Jahrhundert" in *Eurasia Nostratica. Festschrift für Karl Heinrich Menges*, ed. Gy. Decsy

However, this trend towards a polyglot chancery production was being reversed in the first half of the sixteenth century, as the imperial identity and cultural idiom were solidifying. The reign of Sultan Süleyman was crucial in this respect, as it witnessed the emergence of distinctively Ottoman style in architecture and decorative arts.<sup>39</sup> The same applies for Ottoman Turkish, whose development occurred along with the imperial expansion.<sup>40</sup> The nexus of these trends was the growing imperial bureaucracy, whose members played a crucial role in literary production and the construction of *Rumi* identity.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the shift away from multilingual chancery practice was inextricably tied with the crystallization of Ottoman imperial edifice.<sup>42</sup> While other languages continued to be used locally and for pragmatic reasons, the official correspondence produced by the chancellery shifted decidedly towards Ottoman Turkish, with Persian and Arabic as secondary mediums of literary expression and became a marker of loyalty and belonging to the Ottoman polity. By imposing the language of communication, the Porte asserted its authority and enforced conformity.

How did the Crimean and Moldavian chanceries respond to the emergence of the new centre of power and chancery practice? We know more regarding the Crimean response in this respect. As scholars have repeatedly pointed out,

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et al., (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), pp. 82–88; Boško Bojović, “Dubrovnik et les Ottomans (1430–1472): 20 actes de Murād II et de Mehmed II en médio-serbe,” *Turcica*, 19 (1987), pp. 129–44; Georgios Salakides, *Sultansurkunden des Athos-Klosters Vatopedi aus der Zeit Bayezid II. und Selim I.* (Thessaloniki, 1995); Vančo Bošković, “Odnos srpske i turske diplomatike” *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, 3–4 (1980), pp. 219–36; Neven Isailović and Aleksandar Krstić, “Serbian language and Cyrillic script as a means of diplomatic literacy in South Eastern Europe in 15th and 16th centuries” in *Literacy Experiences Concerning Medieval and Early Modern Transylvania*, eds. Susana Andea and Adinel Ciprian Dincă, (Bucharest: Academiei, 2015), pp. 185–95. See also Darling, “The development of Ottoman governmental institutions in the fourteenth century,” in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, eds. Vera Constantini and Markus Koller, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 17–34.

39 On the emergence of Ottoman identity and visual idiom, see Christine Woodhead, “Ottoman languages,” in Christine Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 143; Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 197–98; Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 7–8; Gülrü Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2011), pp. 30–32.

40 Darling, “Ottoman Turkish,” 179–80; Woodhead, “Ottoman Languages,” p. 145.

41 Şahin, *Empire and Power*, pp. 30–32; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 167–68.

42 Woodhead, “Ottoman Languages,” p. 143.

the letters addressed by Mengli Girey to the Ottoman sultan adopt a different tone and formal features following the 1475 Ottoman intervention in the Crimean succession struggle. Whereas those predating Gedik Ahmed Pasha's expedition follow faithfully the pattern of Jochid diplomatics and are written in Kipchak Turkish, those following this date adopt much more subservient rhetoric, with Mengli Girey declaring himself the sultan's slave.<sup>43</sup> The formal features of the documents followed the rhetoric: contrary to the Jochid tradition, the documents do not open with the name of the khan, which was moved to the end of the letter; instead the letter—following the *inscriptio*—opens with *salutatio* praising the sultan. Moreover, the name of the khan is rendered not in its Kipchak form (*Mengli Girey*), but rather in Oghuz rendition as *Bengli Girey*.<sup>44</sup>

The radical departure from the tradition of Jochid diplomatics was obviously caused by immediate political circumstances of Mengli Girey, embroiled in the conflict with his brother Nurdevlet, supported by the Great Horde. In this context, the Ottoman assistance was critical for Mengli Girey's bid for the throne. Thus, his decision to diverge from the established models and represent himself as a humble servant of the sultan should be understood as a

43 See Mengli Girey's undated letter to (most likely) Mehmed II, Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivindeki Altın Ordu, Kırım ve Türkistan hanlarına ait yarlık ve bitikler* (Istanbul, 1940), pp. 91–92; Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey and Alexandre Bennigsen (eds.), *Le Khanat de Crimée dans les Archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapı* (Paris, 1978), 80–82. The undated letter is known to Romanian historians through translations published by Tahsin Gemil, “Două documente tăărăști referitoare la campania din 1476 a sultanului Mehmed al II-lea în Moldova,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie ‘A.D. Xenopol’* 5 (1968) pp. 191–2 and Mustafa A. Mehmed (ed.), *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1976), doc. 3. Romanian editions of the document do not provide transliteration of the text and omit indicating some features of the language. Hence, I have utilized the edition prepared by Lemerrier-Quelquejey and Bennigsen. Tahsin Gemil, publishing a translation of the document in Romanian, provides a short description of the document, stating that ‘the script is characterized by the finesse of *nesih*. The language is simple, specific for Ottoman documents of the early period, with the exception that words of *Kipchak* and *Chagatay* origin appear frequently. Similarly, it has to be pointed out that words of Arabic and Persian, abundant in *elkab* (*inscriptio*) *do'va* (*salutatio*) and in the conclusion, had not yet undergone morphological transformations of Ottoman-Tatar grammar’, Gemil, “Două documente”: 191, fn. 60. While technically correct, this description implies that Ottoman Turkish language constituted the baseline for Crimean chancery at that time, which was not the case. In fact, another letter by Mengli Girey, dated 25 October 1469, follows closely the Jochid tradition, see Lemerrier-Quelquejey and Bennigsen (eds.), *Le Khanat de Crimée*, p. 71. Thus, it seems to me that we should consider the language employed in the letters from this period a considerable break with pre-1475 tradition, see Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, p. 108.

44 Lemerrier-Quelquejey and Bennigsen (eds.), *Le Khanat de Crimée*, p. 78.



rhetorical choice rather than a shift in the chancery practice. The Ottomanized language, diplomatic format and rhetoric employed in the letters stand in stark contrast with other documents produced by the khan's chancery. *Yarluks* issued in 883/1478–1479 and 890/1485 faithfully follow his pre-1475 documents, clearly demonstrating that despite Mengli Girey presenting himself as a humble servant in his letter to the sultan, the chancery carried out business as usual.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the *şerhnames* issued for the Grand Duke of Muscovy retained their structure and rhetoric. This was crucial in two respects: on the one hand, given the presence of scribes proficient in Kipchak in the Muscovite chancery, it was simply easier to conduct the correspondence in Kipchak and relying on Jochid models; on the other, it served an important symbolic purpose. Since Mengli Girey and his immediate saw himself as the rightful ruler of the Jochid *ulus* and 'donating' lands to Muscovy featured prominently in *şerhnames* sent to Muscovite court (as well as to the Lithuanian one), the continuity of chancery practice and models of diplomatics served to reinforce these claims.<sup>46</sup> Thus, for the Crimean khans, it was of vital importance to keep the discourses of domination over the steppe and that of subservience to the Ottoman sultans independent of each other. As a result, throughout history, correspondence addressed to the tsars' court continued to be the most 'Kipchak' from the point of view of language, while that with the Porte conformed most to the stylistic features employed by sultanic chancery.<sup>47</sup>

This would be difficult to accomplish without the existence of chancery traditions well-versed in employing multiple scripts, languages and diplomatic formats. By compartmentalizing the correspondence with the sultans and developing the conventions geared specifically to the Porte's chancery idiom, they were able to uphold the discourse that presented them as independent rulers and true masters of the Black Sea steppe vis-à-vis their subjects, as well as courts in Moscow, Vilnius and Cracow. In fact, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the skillset of the chancery was further enriched in response to the growing role of the Polish language in the region.<sup>48</sup> Thus, from the

45 Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, p. 108.

46 On this topic, see Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 266–278.

47 Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, pp. 108–109. As Dariusz Kołodziejczyk pointed out, in comparison with documents sent to the Muscovite court, the language was more Ottomanized in those sent to Polish kings, see Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 224–229. Mária Ivanics, in turn, points out that khans' letters to Transylvanian princes generally were much closer in linguistic terms to those addressed to the Porte, see Mária Ivanics, "Formal and linguistic peculiarities of 17th century Crimean Tatar letters addressed to princes of Transylvania," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 29 (1975), pp. 221–24.

48 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 237–238.

point of view of the Crimean chancellery, its acquaintance with handling various discourses and models of documentary production had an important political role.

The response of the Moldavian chancery to the growth of Ottoman power is harder to more difficult in the earlier period but seems to follow a similar route, although with a considerable delay and at a slower pace. The first extant documents addressed to the Porte by Moldavian voivodes date from the beginning of the sixteenth century and are preserved in undated Ottoman translations, based on original documents that have unfortunately disappeared.<sup>49</sup> The first of those documents, a letter sent by Bogdan III and convincingly dated by Tahsin Gemil at late 1511, contains news regarding the situation in Hungary and Poland and recounts the voivode's military preparations to confront Mengli Girey's troops.<sup>50</sup> While the summary refers to Bogdan III as Bāyezīd II's slave, it is unclear whether this was a faithful translation of the original or an embellishment by the translator in order to bring the document in line with Ottoman conventions.<sup>51</sup> Otherwise, the contents remain focused on political affairs and contain little in terms of defining the relationship between the Ottomans and Bogdan III.

However, the following decades bring that Moldavian voivodes and their scribes made an effort to adjust their practices. This can be seen from a series of petitions from the reign of Stephan the Young show a growing adjustment of Moldavian chancery practice to that of the Porte.<sup>52</sup> The correspondence sent to Istanbul increasingly adopted the format of *'arz*.<sup>53</sup> This growing alignment within the field of Moldavian-Ottoman reflects the shifting balance of power and changing strategies of Moldavian chancery in addressing the sovereign

49 Given the practices in Southeastern Europe in this period, it is possible that the document was written in Romanian-Slavonic and translated by a Serbian-speaking official. In this period, Serbian was frequently employed as an intermediary language in the region, including the Porte's correspondence with Hungarian rulers and the Habsburgs, see Hazai, "Zur Rolle des Serbischen," pp. 82–86; Isailović and Krstić, "Serbian language and Cyrillic script," *passim*.

50 Tahsin Gemil, "Din relațiile moldo-otomane în primul sfert al secolului al XVI-lea (pe marginea a două documente din arhivele de la Istanbul)" *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie 'A.D. Xenopol' 9* (1972), p. 141. For dating of the document, see *ibid.*, p. 135.

51 For the instances of translation in Ottoman diplomatic practice, see Claudia Römer, "Contemporary European translations of Ottoman documents and vice versa (15th–17th centuries)" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 61, no. 1–2 (2008), pp. 216–22.

52 Gemil, "Din relațiile moldo-otomane," pp. 141–2.

53 On this format, see M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Osmanlı Paleografya ve Diplomatik İlmî*, second edition (Istanbul, 1992), pp. 105–108.

power. Although it seems that the documents had been initially drafted in Slavonic and it is only in the mid-sixteenth century that we find first traces secretaries of Turkish language present in the voyvodal entourage,<sup>54</sup> the evidence strongly suggests that the development of new diplomatic format had already been underway. This process concluded in the seventeenth century, whereby the correspondence between the voivodes and the Porte became the responsibility of an Ottoman scribe known as *divan efendi*.<sup>55</sup> The extant petitions from this period demonstrate that by this time, the Moldavian chancery successfully integrated the Ottoman diplomatic format and relied on skilled scribes for this matter.

While hailing from different traditions of diplomatics, the Moldavian and Crimean chancelleries faced similar political and cultural challenges on the eve of growing Ottoman suzerainty and crystallizing imperial discourse. Their response was integrating another facet of their document production, adjusting the formula to the one employed by the Ottoman chancery. At the same time, the production of internal documents and correspondence with other courts continued as before. The tradition of multicultural diplomatics sustained the Moldavian and Crimean rulers' ability to perpetuate multiple discourses and strategies of legitimacy and rhetoric, despite the growing Ottoman political hegemony. At the same time, however, the separation was not absolute, and the 'seepage' of Ottoman forms of diplomatics to other spheres of chancery production occurred, both deliberately and unintentionally. This process of osmosis I will discuss in the following section.

#### 4 Employing Ottoman Models

As I have pointed out, the continuity of Crimean and Moldavian diplomatic practices permitted their rulers to perpetuate traditional sources of legitimacy despite their inclusion within the Ottoman Empire. However, we are able to trace that elements of Ottoman diplomatics *did* have an impact on other areas of chancery production throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century. While some of them can be explained through the natural process of borrowing and changing linguistic realities, others indicate a deliberate attempt to appropriate and adapt Ottoman models for local use. Moreover, even the inclusion of certain innovations and instances of revivalism within the documentary

54 DANIC, *Documente turcești* 23 and 25.

55 On this institution, see Petre Strihan, "Divan-effendi în Țara Românească și Moldova în secolele XVII–XIX," *Studii. Revista de istorie*, 21, no. 5 (1968), pp. 881–96.

format of said chanceries can be understood as a conscious dialogue with the patterns set by the Porte.

The 'Ottomanization' of documents can be more easily identified in the Crimean case and has been thoroughly studied by students of the Khanate. This is particularly the case of the growing Oghuz influence on the language employed by the khans' chancery. This process began in the mid-sixteenth century and proceeded at a varying pace, depending on the type of documents involved.<sup>56</sup> The mobility of religious scholars and political elites between the political centre of Istanbul and the Crimean court and selective adoption of Ottoman administrative models starting from the mid-sixteenth century further facilitated and accelerated the process.<sup>57</sup>

Other elements of the diplomatic format—such as the Crimean *tuğra*—seem to have been deliberate borrowings. Unlike in western Anatolia, where the ruler's cypher had been employed by the Seljuks of Rum and throughout the *beyliks'* period, this tradition was absent in the Jochid *ulus* and early Crimean chancery. However, from the mid-sixteenth century onward, we can observe the evolution of a traditional Jochid element—the *sözüm* formula—which increasingly took the shape modelled after that of Ottoman sultans.<sup>58</sup> The process concluded by the beginning of the seventeenth century and from then on, the *tuğra* was employed in most documents issued in the name of the khan. There was an important exception, though: in the documents addressed to the Ottoman court, the cypher was conspicuously absent.

The reasons for this omission are not difficult to deduce. Given that in the realm Ottoman diplomatics the *tuğra* was not only a form of *corroboratio* but also an evocative symbol of sultan's sovereign power, its use within chancery production was highly regulated and its use by unauthorized individuals was interpreted as a challenge to the dynasty's power.<sup>59</sup> For instance, Mustafa

56 Usmanov, *Žalovannye akty*, p. 108; Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 222–28.

57 On this topic, see Natalia Królikowska, "The law factor in Ottoman-Crimean Tatar relations in the early modern period," in *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors*, eds. Jeroen Duindam et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 177–96, esp. 183–4. The same author recently published a monograph study, which I have been unable to consult at the moment of writing the present article, Natalia Królikowska-Jedlińska, *Law and Division of Power in the Crimean Khanate (1532–1774)* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018).

58 On this topic, see Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 342–49; Sagit Faizov, *Tugra i Vselennaja: moxabbat-name i šert-name krymskix xanov i princev v ornamental'nom, sakral'nom i diplomatičeskom kontekstax* (Moscow and Bahçesaray, 2002).

59 For a comprehensive discussion of Ottoman *tuğra* from the point of view of diplomatics, see Suha Umur, *Osmanlı Padıŝah Tuğraları*, second edition (Istanbul, 2011).

Selâniki claimed that a famous warlord of late sixteenth-century *celali* rebellions in Anatolia, Karayazıcı, had adopted a *tuğra*, thus making a bid for independent rule.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the officials of the Porte were constantly wary of the Girey khans' ambitions, further adding to the risk of adopting *tuğra* by the khans.<sup>61</sup> In this context, inserting their cypher into the document would likely bring an Ottoman crackdown. At the same time, these concerns did not dissuade the khans' from employing their cyphers in internal documents and those addressed to other courts. Clearly, this stemmed from their appreciation of the *tuğra* as a powerful symbol of sovereignty and dynastic power.

The formation of Crimean *tuğra* constitutes a prime case of Ottoman models of diplomatics 'seeping' into other realms of local chancellery practices. At the same time, it is clear that this borrowing was not a product of Ottoman pressure but rather stemmed from the agency of local rulers and their scribes, who appropriated the Ottoman blueprint and tailored it to their needs. What is important here is not that the inclusion of the *tuğra* served the purpose of showcasing the khan's adherence to the Porte, but rather his appropriation of Ottoman diplomatic forms as a means of displaying his authority.

Some elements of seventeenth-century Crimean documents also suggest an attempt to discursively distance the khans from the Porte. A particularly interesting point in this respect is the use of *baysa* (appended golden seal) throughout much of the seventeenth century. While *baysas* constituted an important aspect of Mongol and Jochid tradition of diplomatics,<sup>62</sup> they had long fallen out of use, and the new *baysa*, employed from the 1620s onwards, was not a revival of an ancient practice. Instead, as Dariusz Kołodziejczyk pointed out, it was likely an innovation introduced in response to Polish-Lithuanian and Muscovite models, albeit one dressed in traditionally Jochid vocabulary.<sup>63</sup> Its introduction by Mehmed III Girey and his *kalga*, Shahin Girey, should

60 Mustafa Selâniki, *Tarih-i Selâniki*, ed. Mehmed İpşirli, vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1989), pp. 834, 837. Historians dispute the veracity of this information; however, from the perspective of the present study, whether Karayazıcı had in fact adopted his own *tuğra* is not as important as the chronicler's interpretation of this act, see Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), pp. 205–206.

61 An illustrative example in this respect is an episode recorded in Alexandru Amiras' chronicle, whereby Gheorghe Duca—upon Köprülü Ahmed Pasha's orders—sent letters to the khan, calling him *padişah*. The letters were confiscated by Ottoman authorities and led to Duca's dismissal from the Moldavian throne, see Dan Simonescu (ed.), *Cronica anonimă a Moldovei, 1661–1729 (Pseudo-Amiras)* (Bucharest, 1975), p. 44.

62 Nikolaj C. Munkuyev, "A new Mongolian p'ai-tzū from Simferopol," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 31 (1977), pp. 185–218.

63 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Popytki vosstanovlenija mongol'skoj tradicii v Krymskom xanstve načala XVII veka: *Bajsa, tat ve tavgač*," *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie*, 3 (2015), pp. 91–101.

be read as an expression of their ambitions and anti-Ottoman stance, along with the revival of other traditional forms of legitimacy, such as the use of old Turkic title of the khan as the ruler of “Tat and Tavgač”, harking back to pre-Islamic traditions.<sup>64</sup>

In comparison with the Crimean Khanate, the adoption of Ottoman elements to the documents issued for internal use and diplomatic contacts with non-Ottoman courts has garnered relatively little attention and still awaits a comprehensive survey. However, there are indications that some elements were deliberately inserted to emphasize the ruler’s connection with the Sublime Porte and identify the sultan as the source of the incumbent’s authority. The most evocative in this respect is the adoption of a *tuğra*-like cypher by Voivode Ștefan Tomșa II and Miron Barnovschi as a *subscriptio* in documents issued for the boyars and monasteries of the principality. Although written in Cyrillic script and containing the voivode’s name and title, the symbol shows obvious parallels with Ottoman *tuğras* and *pençes*.<sup>65</sup> The rationale behind this adaptation of Ottoman models does not seem to have been the same as in the case of Crimean khans: unpopular among the local elite and able to ascend the throne thanks to the support of his Ottoman patron, Ștefan Tomșa II aimed to emphasize his ties to the Porte. However, as in the case of the Gireys, they found a new means of self-fashioning. What is more, it seems that the direct inspiration for Moldavian pseudo-*tuğras* came from Crimea, given the morphological similarity between the Gireys’ *tuğras* and those of Ștefan Tomșa.

What such instances of ‘seepage’ of diplomatic models from Ottoman tradition to local chancery practices and discourses of authority and identity. While the adoption of *tuğra* by the Crimean khans can be interpreted as an assertion of sovereign power by the members of Girey dynasty and could potentially run afoul of the Porte, whereas the goal of Ștefan Tomșa seems to have been emphasizing his ties with the Ottoman imperial edifice. However, the political goals behind these borrowings are secondary to the fact that the khans and voivodes increasingly appropriated and manipulated the elements of Ottoman

64 Ibid., 96.

65 See, for instance, SĴAN—Iași, M-rea Galata ii/4; SĴAN—Iași, M-rea Bisericiani iv/5; DANIC, Achiziții noi cxcv/3. The similarities of Miron Barnovschi’s cypher to the Ottoman *tuğra* were first noted in Petronel Zahariuc, “Un nou document cu portretul votiv al lui Miron vodă Barnovschi,” in Zahariuc, *De la Iași la Muntele Athos: studii și documente de istorie a Bisericii* (Iași: Univ. Al. I. Cuza, 2009), p. 38. However, the author did not engage in an in-depth analysis of the cypher or its origin. I am addressing the issue in Michał Wasiucionek, “Garments, signatures and Ottoman self-fashioning in the imperial periphery: Moldavian voyvode Ștefan Tomșa II and Ottomanization in the early seventeenth century,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, forthcoming.

diplomats to express their social and political position. While different strands of chancery discourse remained separate, such deliberate and localized borrowings show that the chanceries successfully integrated the Ottoman practice into their own repertoire. This subtle management of discourses of legitimacy would be impossible without the tradition of multicultural chancery, well-acquainted with multiple models of document production and comfortable with handling several discourses at the same time.

## 5 Conclusion

Obviously, a short survey presented here by no means exhausts the topic under discussion. Instead, it is meant as the indication of a complex relationship between different traditions and the way they played out in the process of transition from *Pax Mongolica* to *Pax Ottomanica* in the Black Sea region. By maintaining a strong tradition of multilingual chancelleries in the pre-Ottoman period, the rulers in Bahçesaray and Suceava were able to successfully integrate the models espoused by the Porte and weave them into the fabric of their own document-producing apparatus, without giving up on the traditional formats and means of producing legitimacy. The multiplicity of scripts, languages and discourses already utilized in their chanceries greatly facilitated this integration, while also allowing to compartmentalize individual conventions and tailor the rhetoric and diplomatics to the addressee and the political agenda of individual rulers.

In this context, however, the instances of deliberate borrowing—such as the emulation of *tuğras*—gain special importance. Despite the compartmentalization, the physical proximity and cooperation between scribes acquainted with a variety of traditions provided a fertile ground for inspiration, appropriation and transfer of particular elements of diplomatics from one tradition to another. This, in turn, provided the rulers and their chancery staff with more flexibility and encouraged innovative ways of representing legitimacy and identity that went beyond the limits set by specific format. Such innovations did not take place under Ottoman pressure but rather constituted the products of the agency of provincial actors, who proved particularly apt at taking control of the discourse of Ottoman diplomatics and selectively deployed them to advance their own interests. As such, the cross-cultural aspect of the diplomatics has to be taken into account in tracing the shifting means of legitimizing power and self-fashioning among the elites of the Ottoman Black Sea periphery.





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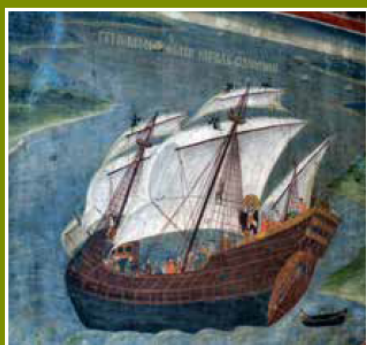
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The history of the Black Sea may be considered as alternating between an “inner lake,” when a single empire establishes control over the sea and its surrounding areas, and that of an “open sea,” in which various continental or maritime powers compete for the region’s resources. By taking into account the impact both of major powers and minor political actors, this volume proposes a long-term perspective of regional history. It offers a deep understanding of the political and commercial history of the Black Sea between the 14th and the 16th centuries, and provides insights into the political and economic developments of the region.

